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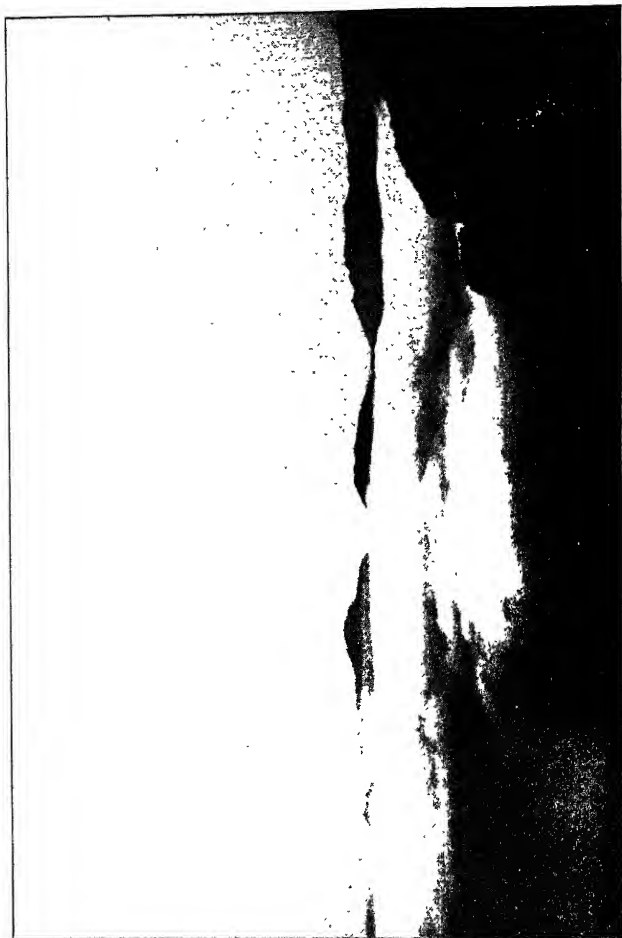
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ON EITHER SIDE
OF
THE RED SEA

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Frontispiece.



THE ETERNAL HILLS

ON EITHER SIDE
OF
THE RED SEA

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE
GRANITE RANGES OF THE EASTERN DESERT OF EGYPT,
AND OF SINAI

BY

H. M. B., C. E. B. AND T. B.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION AND FOOTNOTES BY

E. N. BUXTON

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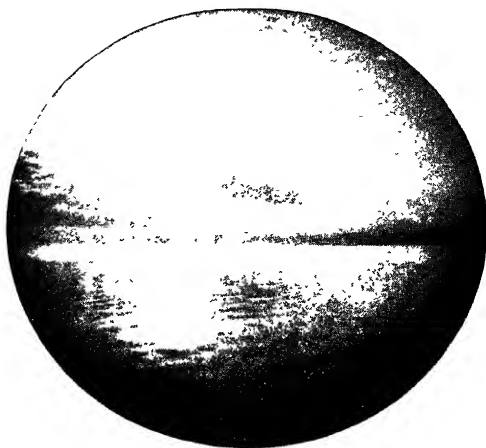


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ON EITHER SIDE OF THE RED SEA.



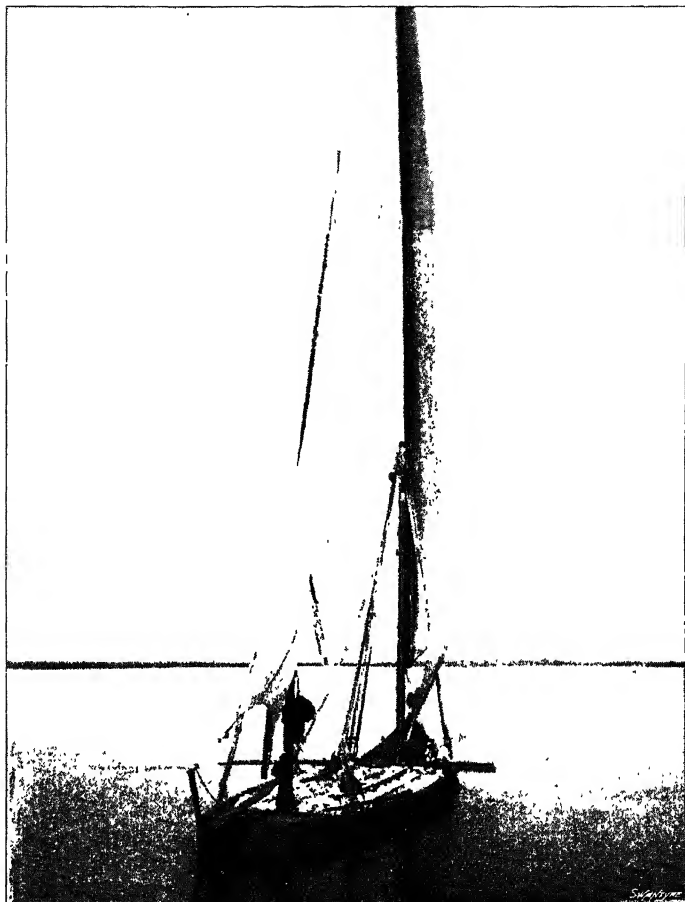
INTRODUCTION.

THE reprinting of these extracts from the letters of my companions, written during two delightful journeys undertaken in 1893 and 1894, was not due to literary ambition on their part. These descriptions are simply designed to serve as a thread to connect and explain the series of

photographs, reproduced by the Swan Electric Engraving Company, which accompany them, and which are the chief motive for this little book. These last were taken with an ordinary Kodak camera, such as is now commonly found on the back of every tourist. They have no more claim to distinction than the productions of thousands of amateurs similarly equipped; but most of them represent scenes comparatively close at hand and yet rarely visited.

No one will deny the surpassing interest of these regions. That corner of the world where two continents are joined by a strip of sand, has, perhaps, been the subject of more international jealousy during the last six thousand years than any other area of the same size. At the present day the attention of politicians and strategists is never long diverted from the gates to which the commerce of the world converges from east and from west.

Thousands pass daily between Suez and Bab-el-Mandeb, along the narrow sea which serves, and always has served, as the greatest highway of nations. Against



A NATIVE BOAT

the setting and the rising sun they see great serrated ridges which spring abruptly and without transition slopes from the plain; for on either side the strip of water-way is hedged in by a stately procession of granite peaks.

Yet the inner recesses of these ranges and their singular beauties are comparatively little known. Even the enterprising class who wander over the earth in search of new playgrounds, with few exceptions have passed them by. True, that every year one or two parties follow the usual camel route to the Convent of St. Katherine, and return as they came, but it is rarely that the grandest ravines in the southern portion of the Sinaitic peninsula are visited. Again, on the opposite coast, though the ancient trade route from Coptos to Kosseir is sometimes used, and may again have a military value when the railway is extended, scarcely half-a-dozen explorers have crossed the 100 miles of waterless desert which intervenes between the Nile and such notable peaks as Gebel Gharib, Gebel Dukhân and the Kittar group of mountains.

It is to the remarkable scenic charm of these ranges that we desire to call attention. The region is generally free from rain ; but water distilled in the hotter seas of the south and hoisted against their cold summits, is occasionally precipitated with extraordinary suddenness and copiousness, and from the absence of soil on the rocks, it rushes off with exceptional violence.

In the course of ages such floods have carved for themselves passages, the depth and intricacy of which are unsuspected from a distance.

Mr. Holland describes such a storm and its destructive effects, of which he was a witness in 1867. We also had such an experience, and ran some risk of disaster from it.

Owing to the impervious character of the granite, water, only here and there visible in the form of running streams or even pools, is retained to some extent in pockets in the bottoms of the valleys. These are commonly filled with stones and grit to a flat surface, but the moisture below is within reach of the roots of plants. Hence a tropical growth in combination with noble rocks,



SAND-WORN ROCKS

Another moulding agent, of little power in northern climates, is here a potent instrument in producing unfamiliar effects of rock carving. I refer to sand, driven before the wind, which honeycombs and undermines the hardest rocks. The illustration opposite this page shows a fair example of the way this agent works, and also of the splitting of the granite effected by the rapid alternations of temperature.

The tribes which inhabit these valleys, though far from numerous, are of peculiar interest. Owing to their isolation from the rest of the world, these mountain Arabs have retained their ancient customs in a way which it would be hard to match elsewhere. Having no books, they govern themselves by tradition handed down from father to son, and know scarcely any other law. Their sources of sustenance and daily needs, their habits and superstitions, remain unmodified. Because nature is not bountiful on these slopes, and imperatively lays down the hard conditions of bare existence, this isolation is easily accounted for. The coasts of the Red Sea are fringed

with coral reefs, through which the navigation, even of small boats, is difficult. By land the desert separates them from their fellow men. Nor has their scanty produce tempted the conqueror. To this rule I know of only three exceptions: Seneferoo, a king of the third Egyptian dynasty, and some of his successors, sent expeditions into Sinai to dig for the "Blue" (turquoise). Moses led his host through the country of these Amalekites, unless we are to believe some of the later critics, who deny that he followed this route at all.

In the Egyptian Mountains, north of Kosseir, we know of no invaders until Roman times, when the Emperors, ever the most active seekers after fine stones, quarried the porphyry and other choice marbles.

To the northern visitor these elevated regions offer an ideal climate in winter. The generous sunshine is almost as constant as it is in Egypt, but the air is always fresh and exhilarating; while at night the warmest wools are all too thin to arrest the rapid radiation of heat.

The object or excuse for the journeys here described



was to secure specimens of the small but handsome wild goat, the *Ibex Sinaiticus*, or *Bedan* of the Arabs, which is found on either side of the Gulf of Suez. The steep and broken nature of the ground which the animal inhabits, and its colour, which closely assimilates to its surroundings, as well as its restless habit, make it a difficult subject to stalk, and, except at Suakim, where our officers occasionally hunt it when they are not hunting the Madhi, few Europeans have been successful in obtaining the rare trophy at first hand, though some accomplished sportsmen have sought to do so. Our ambition in this direction was doomed to disappointment on the first trial, but we were rewarded at the second attempt.

The ibex occasionally wanders to the bluffs which overlook the Nile; and that the Egyptians hunted it from the earliest times we have the graven evidence of their tombs. They also captured the kids and kept them as pets, and, on great occasions, offered them as a sacrifice to their gods.

Travellers who take an intelligent interest in the

Nile are now counted by many thousands, and perhaps no apology is needed for adding to our gallery a few pictures of scenes in that well-travelled land. If the subjects are trite, they are mostly from somewhat novel points of view.

My daughters' acknowledgments and my own are especially owing to Mr. Swan, who has exercised as much judgment and care in reproducing our casual pictures as if they were the laborious achievements of skilled professionals, and any charm they may possess is mainly due to his admirable art.

E. N. BUXTON.

KNIGHTON : *April* 1895.

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PART I

THE NILE AND THE EASTERN
DESERT.

*



ON THE CANAL.

CHAPTER I.

BY LAND AND SEA.

COAST OF THE ADRIATIC (P. & O. Train):

Sunday morning, January 22, 1893.

WHEN we woke up this morning we found ourselves going along the coast of the Adriatic, over which there are ominous storm clouds. The journey has been very cold. It is curious to see the country covered with snow

which contrasts strangely with the orange trees full of fruit. Bishop Smythies, who is on his way to Zanzibar, gave us a service this morning in full canonicals, in the dining saloon.

“THE CARTHAGE” :

Tuesday, January 24, 1893.

Here we are on board the *Carthage*, which is a splendid big ship. Our cabin is rather minute, and I never saw such a muddle as it was in the first evening, when all our packages were strewn about, and filled it up so that there was no room for us. However, they have got themselves stowed away somehow, and we have now just room to turn round. We went on board at Brindisi about 5.30 on Sunday afternoon, and expected to start in a few hours' time; but such was the force of the wind that two ships had drifted in the harbour and blocked the way, so that when we woke up next morning we found ourselves still at Brindisi.

It was not encouraging to be met as soon as we got on board by a gushing young lady, who poured into our ears a long account of her sufferings since Malta. She told us that they had had such a fearful passage that she and her sister, who were on their way to Cairo, were giving it up and intended to go straight home to England. She implored us to do likewise. We started on Monday morning, soon after breakfast. The wind was something fearful and it was bitterly cold. It froze hard in the night and the decks were sheets of ice. The poor Lascars were shivering, and seemed to feel the cold terribly.

As soon as we got outside the harbour we found a heavy sea, and the waves dashed right over the hurricane deck where we were all standing. It was very rough all day, but was not so bad the next day when we were off the coast of Greece. All the mountains looked grand, covered with snow nearly to the water line. As we crossed from Greece to Crete, it was again very rough, and there were very few people at dinner that night. In spite of the

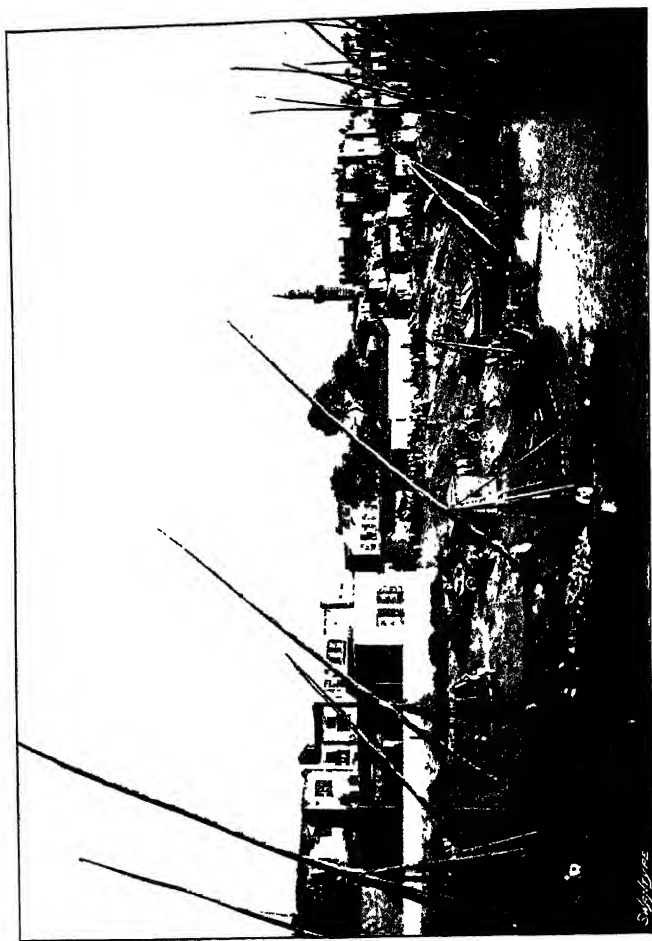
"fiddles," the food was flying in all directions. It really is rather an uncanny feeling when the opposite side of the saloon hangs over your head, and the next moment is far below you.

ISMAILIA :

Friday, January 27, 1893.

The rough weather continued all the way to Port Said, and the swell was so heavy that for a time it was impossible to get into harbour, and we had to lie outside rolling. There were eight or nine steamers in the same plight as ourselves, some of them having been waiting there for two or three days. The Captain was not encouraging, as he told us it was quite possible we shouldn't get in for a day or two. But about four o'clock we saw a tug coming out of the harbour, which proved to have a pilot on board who signalled us to follow, and we crept slowly in, all the other steamers following in a long line ; but one big steamer was drifted out of the channel and stuck there, which rather pleased us.

BANKS OF THE NILE



Sally Stone

At Port Said they take two or three hours coaling—a very dirty operation. A cloud of dust rises from the ship as the Arabs, following each other in a long line and chanting a monotonous song to Allah, shoot the coal out of small baskets. All the passengers landed. It is a ramshackle wooden place run up on a flat slip of sand. We had a splendid donkey ride all round the town. The ship started again at eight. It was delicious on deck after dinner as we went along the Suez Canal. The ships have very bright search lights, which light up the desert on either side, making everything look very weird and silvery. We had to be moored to the bank to allow another big ship to pass.

There was a scrimmage in the evening over the luggage of the Egyptian passengers, which had to be examined, and father had a fearful time with our too numerous packages. We had to be up at five this morning to get off at Ismailia. Everybody was in a great state of excitement, as during the night there had been a robbery on board. The thief had got 30*l.* from one cabin. He had been seen by several

people, and one bold lady pursued him with an unloaded revolver, but unfortunately he wasn't caught. I am very sorry the voyage has come to an end, as, in spite of the weather, I have thoroughly enjoyed it.

C. E. B.



A DEVOTEE.

CHAPTER II.

CAIRO.

CAIRO: *February 3, 1893.*

OUR week here has been in every way as strong a contrast as it can possibly be to the one which preceded it. To begin with, our quarters and surroundings at the

"Continental" are roomy, which those of the *Carthage* certainly were not.

On the first evening we came down prepared to feast our eyes on the gorgeous rooms, the gentlemen's uniforms and the ladies' smart dresses. There was a ball that night, and the guests were all arrayed as if they were going to Buckingham Palace; but much to our disappointment we were not considered worthy to sit among the élite, but were given our dinner in a little room where all the outsiders were stowed away. Perhaps we still showed the dust of travel, but anyhow our clothes did not come up to the average standard.

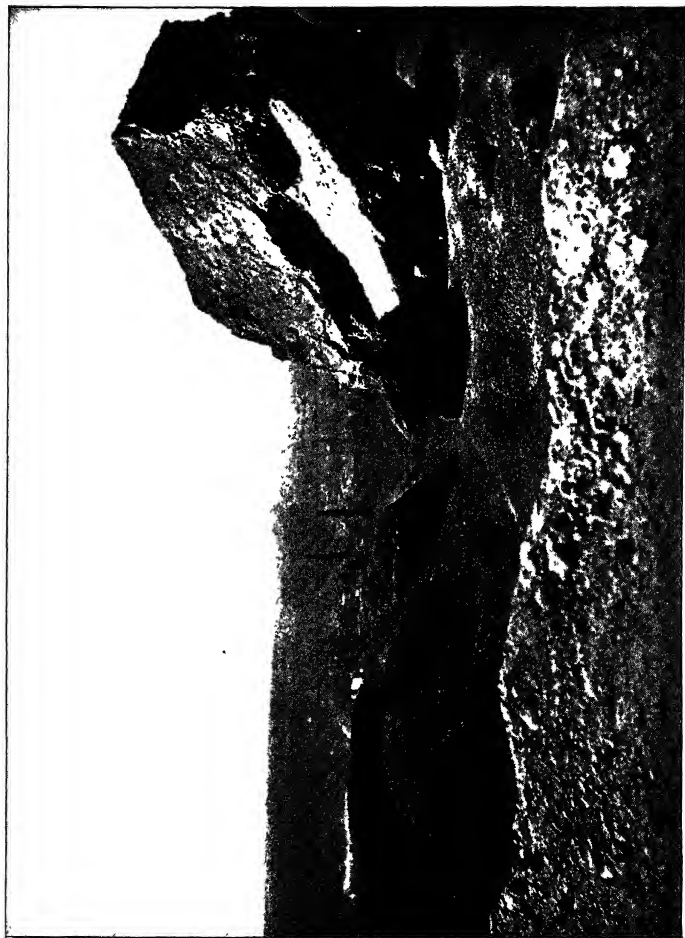
Next morning we made an early start. We all rode on donkeys. Lots of other English were doing the same, and we hoped we did not look as ridiculous as they did. We flew along the streets, the donkey boys urging our steeds with surreptitious pokes, and were always running into some old camel with its load of sugar-cane, or jostling up against a brougham full of harem ladies, muffled up to the eyes. We rode first

to the Citadel, and from the terrace had a grand view of the city with its white minarets, and the Pyramids of Ghizeh and Sakkarah in the distance.

The Mosque of Sultan Hasan is close to the Citadel. It is a handsome building, with a fine quadrangle containing a picturesque, though rather dilapidated, old fountain. Coming home we passed through a succession of narrow little streets and bazaars, the scenes in which were most amusing. They are very bright with draperies, fruit-stalls, &c., and are full of life. At one corner you pass a dusky Indian conjuror, with his monkey and jingling implements, or a Sais in gorgeous Eastern costume dashes past, clearing the street for some Turkish swell. Everywhere are jabbering groups of brown Egyptians and shining black Nubians, in their blue linen garments, generally chewing sugar-cane; women, whose faces are almost entirely concealed with their yashmaks, leaving only the eyes visible, carrying bare-headed little urchins, who ride astride of one shoulder, and whose very scrappy garments are of the brightest colours. The

bazaars are narrow little passages with stalls on either side, where the sellers sit Turkish fashion smoking their huge long pipes. We passed several boys' schools and went up to see one. They are always on the first story, generally in a sort of open balcony, in connection with a mosque. It is curious to see the little fellows all sitting on the floor, swaying themselves backwards and forwards as they gabble through long passages of the Koran.

We were determined to make the most of our first day, and, after lunch, drove to Ghizeh, to see the Pyramids. It was a lovely afternoon, deliciously sunny, and as clear as possible, but not in the least hot. The road to the Pyramids is very straight, raised above a flat green plain which is under water in the time of high Nile. We were pursued most of the way by children yelling for back-sheesh. As soon as we arrived at the Pyramids a party of Bedawin, whose business it is to haul people up the Great Pyramid, made for us and fought over us. Three Arabs is the allotted number for each person, two holding your hands and another to shove behind, and they will not

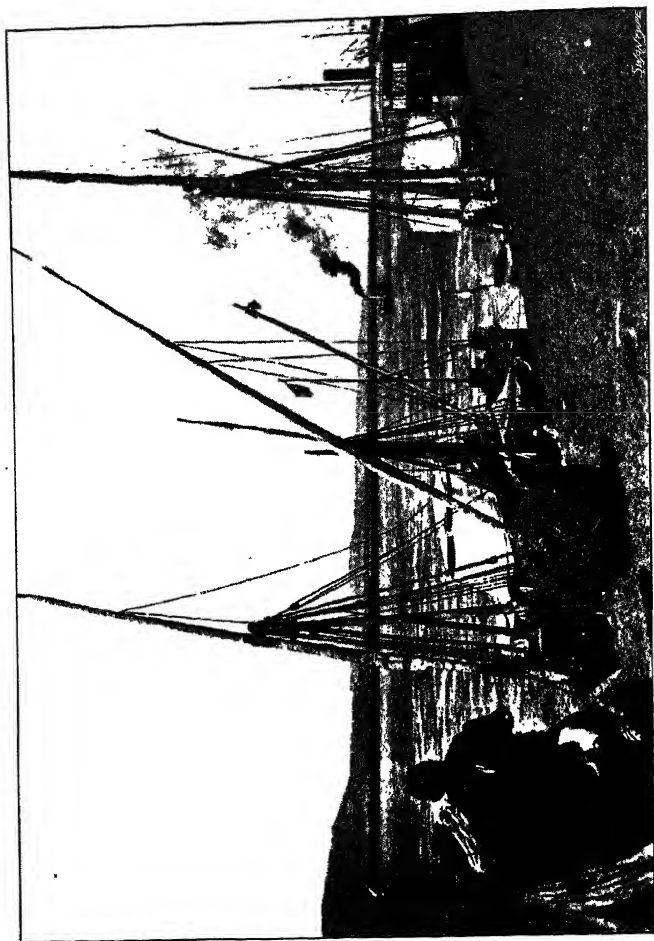


allow you to go with less. After much squabbling, three were chosen for each and we started. Rauch did not see the fun of it at all. "I can get up a mountain by myself," he said, but he could not shake off his Arabs. Some of the steps are four feet high and beyond an ordinary stretch. In the middle of a frantic effort a sudden shove from the man behind would send you flying up much higher than was necessary. When we got near the top they had a great race, each party wanting to get their lady up first. C. and I, puffing and blowing, were hustled along at a fearful rate. We got a splendid view from the top, over the Libyan Desert on one side, and Cairo, the Mokattam Range and Sakkarah on the other. We afterwards went to see the Sphinx and its Temple, followed by all our Bedawin, expostulating vehemently at not having been paid enough. These people are never satisfied. Several other Arabs also joined our party on the chance of something turning up, and we were quite a cavalcade. They regard us as helpless creatures who cannot move a finger without them. When you are walking along

a perfectly simple place an Arab will suddenly rush up to support you, or carry your book for you, and they do not understand it at all if you resent these attentions.

The Sphinx is most extraordinary, a colossal thing cut out of the living rock, and has been crouching there defying time and weather since long before the Pyramids were built. The Temple is built of huge blocks of red granite, some of the slabs being about twenty feet long and very wide, all floated down from Assouan. We had a lovely drive home, with Cairo and the Mokattam hills in front of us, glowing pink in the sunset.

We shall have been at Cairo for the inside of a week, and we have made the most of our time. A great part of it we have spent in the bazaars, which fascinate us. In bargaining we got well cheated at first, now experience has taught us to be cunning. The sellers do all in their power to attract customers, calling out and displaying their wares to you as you ride down the narrow streets, and when once you get cajoled into their shop, or rather



THE OLD AND THE NEW.

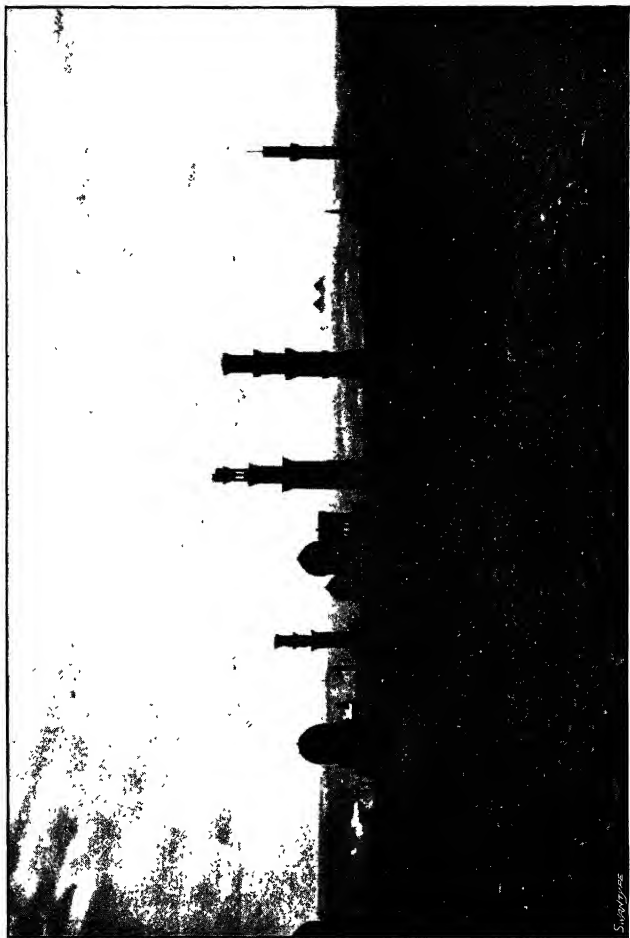
stall, it will be some time before you emerge again. The shopman insists first upon your drinking coffee or Persian tea with him, offers the gentlemen cigarettes and the ladies scent, and having thus, as he hopes, got into your good graces, he proceeds to show his wares. In spite of remonstrances he will pull out the whole of his shop, even if you tell him you do not intend to buy. "Ah! if not to-day, you will to-morrow," he says. And certainly in our case, his surmise was generally correct.

Our affections were divided between the Turkish bazaar, where the stalls are piled with lovely Eastern stuffs, the brass bazaar, and a shop in the Muski, full of the most fascinating hanging lamps, screens, tables, &c., of Mushrebiyeh work—this open lattice-work of wood is very characteristic of Cairo, where nearly all the windows in the native part of the town are screened by it. In these three we have spent much time and fortune; and in the evenings we compare our purchases with those of our friends in the Continental, when our pride has had several

severe falls, on finding how much more we have been cheated than others; but now and then we turn the tables on them.

One of our most delightful expeditions was to the top of the limestone cliff behind the Citadel, and called the Mokattam Hill. After a morning spent in visiting the tombs of the Caliphs, we climbed to a spot among the broken rock of the quarries, from which we got the most exquisite view of Cairo with the Nile and its green plain beyond, and still further, the Pyramids of Ghizeli and Dahshur, with the desert stretching behind them—the Citadel and the tombs of the Caliphs below us in the foreground. We rode back by the tombs of the Mamelukes, just as the sun was setting, and nothing could have been more lovely than the glowing sky and distance, seen between and set off by these old domes and minarets.

On Wednesday we made an expedition to the tombs and Pyramids of Sakkarah. The steamer landed us and a large party of other tourists at Bedrashên, where a troop of squalling donkey-boys and their beasts met us. The



TOMBS OF THE MEMLOOKS—SUNSET.

tombs and Pyramids of Sakkarah are on the edge of the desert, six miles to the west of the Nile. Not the least enjoyable part of the day was the ride there and back, through the lovely palm groves, where the old capital Memphis once stood. Sakkarah was an ancient place of burial, and the most interesting thing we saw is the Tomb of Tih. Tih was a great man who lived under some king of the 5th dynasty, 5000 years ago. The walls are covered with pictures delicately carved and coloured, representing agricultural, and a variety of other homely scenes. The animals and birds are wonderfully good and lifelike. Tih himself is always superintending the various operations, and is represented ten times as big as anybody else.

Old Cairo is very interesting. We were ferried across to the Island of Roda, where stands the Nilometer which is watched with such painful interest by all the inhabitants, for it is by this that the rising and falling of the river are measured. From forty to forty-five feet is the height the river ought to rise. If it fails to reach that

or goes beyond it, it means famine and misery to many. Between the mainland and the Island of Roda many sailing boats are anchored, and there is quite a forest of masts.

H. M. B.



NILE FISHERMEN.

CHAPTER III.

THE RIVER.

DAHABEAH "NITOCRIS," SIOUT: *February 4, 1893.*

WE have just got on to our dahabeah, the *Nitocris*. We started from Cairo last night by the night train, and got here at seven this morning. It was most exciting embarking at last, and we are very comfortable. There is a

nice deck, covered with an awning nearly the whole length of the boat. Below it there are two large cabins and a cosy little saloon. Our dragoman, Selim, is most attentive. Last night he offered to come and see us at every station, but that was a delicate attention we didn't altogether appreciate.

There is to be a great ceremony here to-morrow. The Khedive is coming to open the extension of the railway: all the stations up the line are decorated, and this place is gorgeous with flags, tin lamps and sham obelisks.

To-day we are going up the river as far as Jebel Haridi, which is supposed to be a possible place for ibex.

DAHABEAH "NITOCRIS," SOHAG:

February 5, 1893.

We had a thoroughly lazy day yesterday, lounging about on deck. We steamed about forty miles, and soon after sunset drew up to the bank, right under the tall cliff of Jebel Haridi. We scrambled about in the dark among



A NILE BLUFF.

5/23/1904

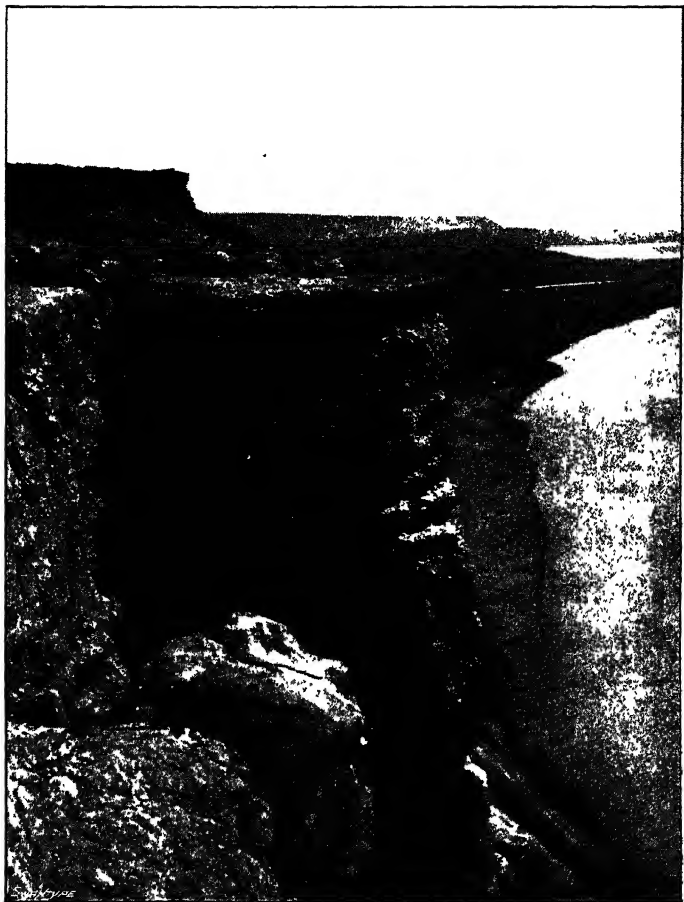
the rocks and palms which form a narrow line between the river and the foot of the bluff. Several Arabs appeared out of the gloom and joined us, and we had an amusing interview.

Father questioned them by signs whether there were any ibex here, and at last made them understand by drawing one by the light of the lantern. The Arabs got very much excited, and kept saying "Aiwa, aiwa, fee"—"Yes, yes, there are," * and gesticulated wildly, spreading out their arms to show us the length of the horns, which according to them are gigantic. We ladies went into one of the Arab mud huts, which was filled with women and children and goats, but were not tempted to stay long.

* The *Ibex Sinaiticus*, so frequently depicted in the early tombs of Egypt, in company with the *Oryx* and *Gazelle*, and presumably more common in those days, for they appear to have been caught in nets, exists at the present day to the east of the Nile from the Delta to Suakim. It lives by preference on the granite formations, where water and vegetation are more abundant, but is occasionally found on the limestone bluffs which overlook the Nile. Although these cliffs approach very near to the river in many places, as at Jebel Haridi, I have never heard of a Nile traveller who had observed one. But then the animal is extremely difficult to see. Herodotus, a very accurate observer, has failed to record it in his account of Egyptian animals.

After an early breakfast next morning, we started to climb the cliff, the steep face of which is honeycombed with huge galleries from which the stone was quarried in ancient times. The square openings only can be seen from below. In a recess of the mountain we came upon the white-domed tomb of the Sheik Haridi, a recluse who once dwelt in one of these caves. At last, after a stiff clamber, we reached the long level top of the mountain. We walked for some way, carefully spying below us as we went, but saw nothing, and then sat down under a shady rock whence there was a magnificent view of the Nile valley, eight hundred feet below, with the desert stretching away to the Libyan Hills behind.

In the afternoon we walked a long distance, keeping to the upper edge of the cliff, and examining the ground for traces, but found no fresh sign, though ibex undoubtedly resort there occasionally. *In several places we saw tracks of hyenas and the bones of large animals which they had carried up to these rocks. We had intended staying there another night, but as it was evident there



THE NILE FROM GEBEL HARIDI.

are no ibex there at present, we decided to move on towards Girgeh.

Our crew consists of fifteen men, though we can't imagine what they are all wanted for. Our cook, "Moojan," is a Nubian, with a shiny black face and curly hair. The dinners which he produces out of the tiny kitchen are marvellous. If we go on at this rate our stores will soon be exhausted, and we shall be left starving when we reach the desert. As we steam along the little birds come and hop about the deck, and many of them are very tame. The native boats, with their graceful lateen sails, are very picturesque. The north wind being the prevailing wind here, they always sail up stream, but in descending, the sails are lowered, and they drift with the current.

DAHABEAH "NITOCRIS," KENEH :

February 9, 1893.

We had a very interesting day at Abydos on Tuesday. The temple is some way from the Nile, and it took us an

hour and a half to get there. Starting at six, we had a delicious ride through the fields and palm groves,



with a red glow from the rising sun on the mountains in front of us. The temple at Abydos was built by Seti I., father of Rameses II. All the sculptures and paintings are wonderfully fresh, and we spent several hours studying them.

We were pursued by Arab boys, offering antiquities for sale, but they are not allowed inside the temple. One asked several shillings for a small bronze



ABYDOS.

Ureus * or cobra's head, but Father refused to give more than one piastre ($2\frac{1}{2}d.$). The boy kept appearing on the temple wall or from behind a column, holding it up temptingly, and at last he held up two fingers to show that he had come down to two piastres, but father would not increase his offer. At last Selim brought it to us triumphantly, having thrashed the boy and insisted on his taking one piastre. Father ordered him to give it back at once, but finally the boy brought it himself and willingly took one piastre for it.

C. E. B.

* The symbol of royalty. This was probably the handle of a lamp. Such lamps are depicted on the walls of Abydos.



FERRYING THE DONKEYS.

CHAPTER IV.

THEBES.

LUXOR: *February* 12, 1893.

WE have been here since Friday. Our dahabeah is stationed among several others, and one or two of Cook's steamers, on the right bank of the river, just below the Temple of Luxor, around and against which the modern village of Luxor is crowded.



FATMA

Thebes itself, with its ruined temples and tombs, is on the opposite side of the river, and most mornings find us rowing across there. On the other side we are greeted by a crowd of squabbling donkey-boys. Having selected the best looking beasts, we and they are ferried across another arm of the river. The donkeys jump in and out of the boat in a most active way. On landing we are received by a troop of little girls with ghooles or water-pots on their heads. Some are Nubians, with shining black faces and gleaming rows of teeth, others brown-complexioned Egyptians. "Doing" the tombs is thirsty work, and it is the correct thing for one or two of these little ghooleh girls to accompany each party with their pots of deliciously cold water. They all clamour to be engaged, the donkey-boys joining in the chorus to advocate the claims of their special favourites. "Me very good looking, so take me and give me two piastres." "This girl best, she good runner, &c." At last two are chosen. Our pets are a very shining and grinning "Zenobia," who appears to be popular with the donkey-boys, and "Fatma,"

a most amusing little character. She is very slight and wiry, and, in profile, curiously like some of the Pharaohs, especially Rameses the Second, whose actual face we have seen at Ghizeh, and whose profile is everywhere sculptured on the walls. She trotted along all day by our donkeys, keeping up a lively prattle in the quaintest English. She always began her sentences at the end and worked backwards, and it was quite a puzzle to unravel them.

The ride across the fertile plain which divides the Theban ruins from the Nile is always a delight. In front, dimly discernible, are the ruins of the great temples, with the barren hill of Sheik Abd-el-Kurnah as a background, visibly honeycombed with tombs. Hoopoes and the lovely white ibis are constantly rising out of the wheat, and flitting about, or strutting along the path, are scores of pigeons and the lovely bronze-coloured doves. Slingers are employed to scare these robbers, and we passed several of them, fine looking boys, whose copper skins gleamed in the sun, slinging bits of hard Nile mud into the expanse of beans and vetches.

We went first to the Ramesseum, one of the many temples built by Rameses II., a most conceited person. It is even said that by erasing the names of his predecessors and substituting his own, he appropriated not only their edifices but also their heroic deeds. Under one of the walls lies part of a colossal statue of him, which must have been at least sixty feet high, but what is left is only a gigantic fragment.

The tombs on the hill of Sheik Abd-el-Kurnah belong for the most part to private people, and to our thinking are even more interesting than those of the kings, for on their walls we find the daily life of the people represented—their amusements, occupations, agricultural pursuits, hunting scenes, &c. In one we saw them gathering in their date harvest. On the same wall and below that was a procession of foreigners (distinguishable by their colour and features) bringing tribute to the Egyptian king, sometimes in the shape of monkeys and other animals. On another wall musicians performed on curious wind instruments, and dancing girls danced to their music. The next

tomb belonged to a sporting gentleman, and on one of the walls was painted a most exciting hunting scene. The great man himself, represented as ten times the size of anybody else, stands on a raft, his little daughter sitting at his feet clasping his knee. The reeds team with game, water rats, ibis, ichneumon, &c., and the water is alive with fish. The raft is already heaped with his spoil. One bird is falling and he is pointing at another with deadly aim, while his slaves behind are preparing his bow and arrow for another shot. We stayed in these tombs until we were positively driven out by the smell of bats.

The valley of the tombs of the kings is utterly barren, and in striking contrast to the dazzling green plain outside. One thinks of the funeral processions up that valley of death. The tombs are approached by galleries and chambers hewn out of the rock, which are covered with inscriptions and scenes from the life after death according to the mysterious beliefs of the ancient Egyptians. Some of them are cut five hundred feet into the mountain. Each consists of a long passage



THE VALLEY OF THE TOMBS OF THE MINA

leading to successive chambers, in the last of which the king's sarcophagus was deposited.

It is strange that in no case were the actual mummies of the kings found in the tombs. They were probably removed in times of disturbance to more secure hiding places. In fact many of them, including Rameses I., Seti I. and his son, Rameses II., the oppressor of the Israelites, were found a few years ago in a pit or gallery half way up the steep cliff of Deir el Bahari, and these famous old kings now hold their court at the Ghizeh Museum.

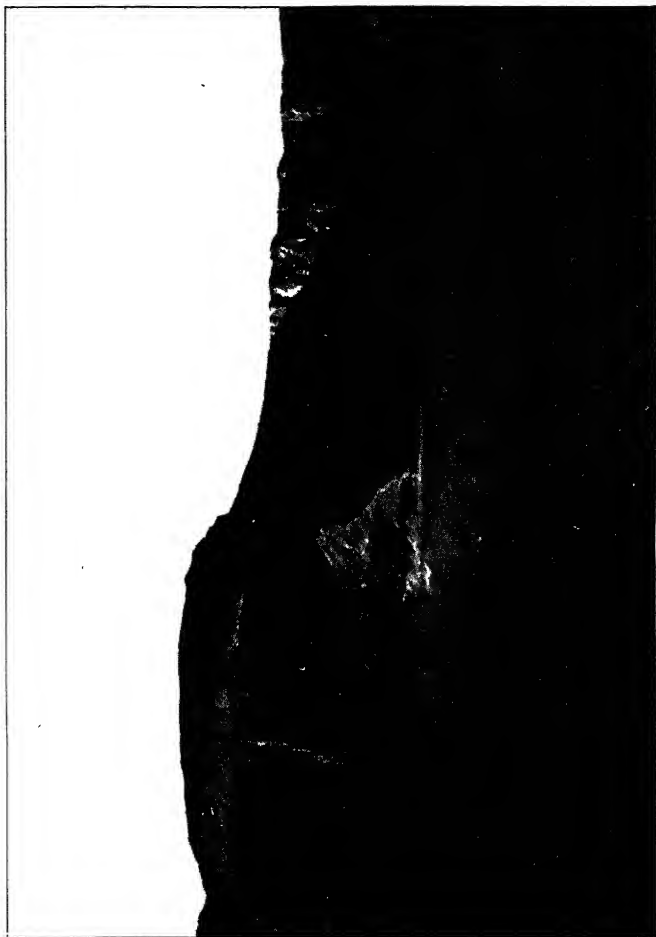
These famous mummies were found by an Arab who, with his family, for some time succeeded in keeping the secret. He and his brothers despoiled the mummies of their treasures—ushabdi, scarabs and other antiquities—and sold them to tourists.

So many of these objects found their way to Europe that Egyptologists suspected that some great "find" had been made by the natives. No time was lost in trying to discover the holder of the secret. One of these men was

arrested and imprisoned, but would not admit of any knowledge of the whereabouts of the treasure ; but fearing, I suppose, that the others would betray him, he confessed to the Mudir of Keneh his knowledge of the hiding place of the coffins, and offered to reveal it. Although it was in the height of summer and the heat was intense, there was no delay in bringing the treasure out of the tomb and removing it to Cairo, under the surveillance of Brugsch Bey. In a few weeks' time all the mummies were safely housed in the Museum at Cairo.

After a long morning spent among the Theban tombs and temples, we generally refreshed ourselves with a rest on the top of the bare hill behind Thebes, from which you get a striking view of the country. Below us the green and fertile valley of the Nile lies stretched out like a map, the river itself like a band of silver, winding and turning in the plain. To the east our picture is bordered by the rosy hills of the desert which lie behind Luxor. To the north and west stretch the bare hills which border the Libyan desert, between which and the

DEIR EL BAHARI.



cultivated plain there is no gradation—utter barrenness and death on the one hand, life and fertility on the other.

The grandeur of Karnak, on the Luxor side of the river, far surpasses that of any other of the Theban temples. We have paid two or three visits to it, and it is worth many more. The great hall of pillars was, I suppose, originally covered, but at the present time the clear blue sky is the only roof. Like all the gigantic works of Egypt, it impresses you with a sense of the mightiness, not only of the building but of the builders, which is almost oppressive. There were, indeed, giants in those days.

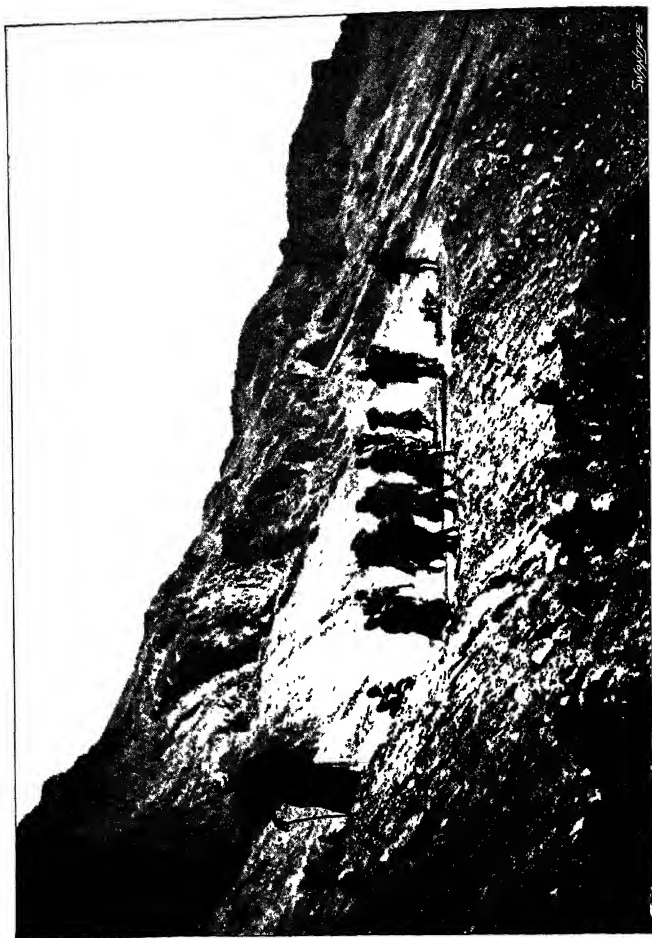
Monday.

Our sight-seeing was varied to-day by a quail shoot, in which Father and G. joined. There was a long line of very scantily-clad native beaters, who walked through the wheat, chewing sugar-cane all the time, or dashed into the impenetrable looking sugar-cane groves, to drive them for jackals and wolves. One wolf was shot, but it was early for quails, and they only shot seven. Still, it was

an amusing experience, and gave us an opportunity of seeing the country behind Luxor.

The German Consul is a great collector of antiquities, and most evenings, when our day's expedition is over, find us poring over his treasures. There we are sure of getting the genuine article, whereas you can never be certain of this in making purchases from the antica-sellers at the tombs. The imitation, especially of the blue scarabæi, is now brought to such perfection that only connoisseurs can tell them from the genuine article, and even they are sometimes taken in. There is a regular factory of scarabæi at Thebes, and the Consul seems rather pleased with the clever imitations which he shows us.

I heard yesterday of a German baroness who was very keen about antiquities, and prided herself on knowing a good thing when she saw it. She bought a piece of ivory from a donkey-boy, said to be very ancient and which was of course found in one of the tombs. It had an inscription which no one could make out. She was much excited about this and thought she had found



EXCAVATORS AT DEIR EL BAHARI.

some great treasure. After some bargaining she bought it. Next day she met a gentleman on another steamer, in a great state of mind at having lost the ivory handle of his umbrella. Those Arab donkey-boys will stick at nothing.

February 15.

Yesterday we made an expedition to Deir el Bahari, under the great limestone cliff to the west of Thebes, which is the more interesting because so much has been recently revealed.

Monsieur Naville was then excavating there, and we were personally conducted over it by him. This temple was built by Queen Hatasu, a very ambitious and enterprising lady who lived about B.C. 1600. The walls are covered with the quaintest sculptures, representing an expedition that she sent to the Land of Punt. Her ships are depicted laden with ebony,* incense trees, apes and

* While we were at Thebes a finely carved ebony door was laid bare in this temple—a part no doubt, of the spoils of Punt, It is now in the Ghizeh Museum.

other animals. The Egyptian artists have scornfully represented all the inhabitants of Punt as extremely ugly and mostly deformed. The quaintest figure of all, the hunchback queen of Punt herself, has unfortunately been cut out, and is now in the Ghizeh Museum.

Here the excavators are hard at work. There were two hundred of them, and they came trooping out in a long line from the back of the temple, where they were clearing away the débris, their baskets, full of rubbish, on their heads. One after another they emptied them down the dust-shoot, and then returned in the same long line. In the afternoon we returned to our dahabcah, and are now steaming back to Keneh.

H. M. B.



CHAPTER V.

THE DESERT.

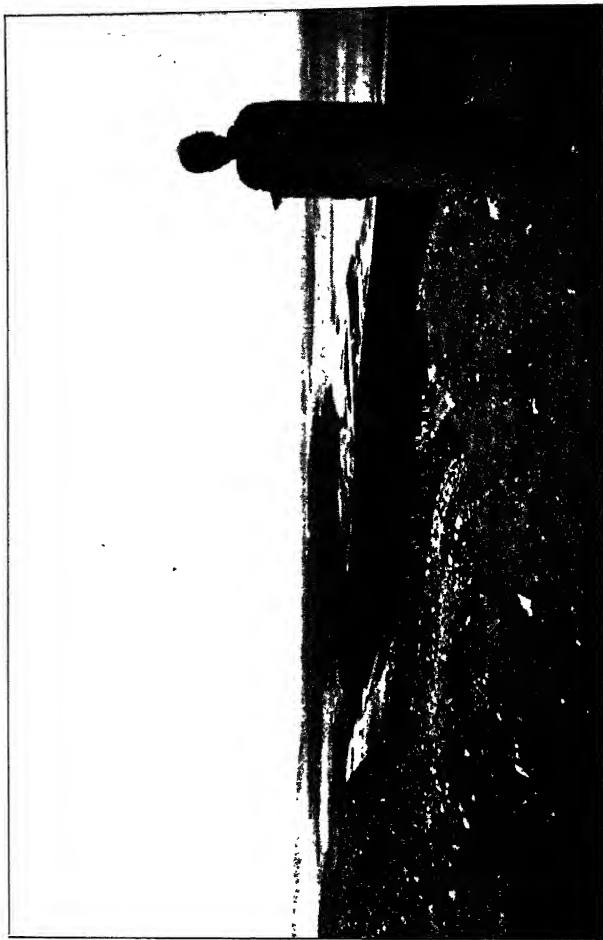
KENEH: *February 16, 1893.*

WHEN we landed here we found about thirty camels on the river's bank, which looked like business. We had a little preliminary trot up and down to try our beasts. They are fearfully slow, but not uncomfortable.

We had a novel experience in the evening. We

went to dinner with the Mudir, the Governor of the Province of Keneh. You would have laughed to see us starting for our dinner-party on donkeys, very smart white ones, the best looking and best goers we have had anywhere. We had a most amusing ride in the dark, and galloped all the way. We passed our thirty camels on the way, all lying down; and they groaned at us in the most piteous way as if they knew what was coming.

The Mudir and his brother received us. We were first ushered into a nearly bare room, with divans all round; and there we all sat, while a very stilted conversation was carried on with the Mudir, through his brother, whose English was quaint. There was rather a wearisome repetition of compliments, and pretty little sentences between Father and the Mudir, who kept assuring us that he was "under our sign," that "his house was ours," that he was ready to do anything for us, would lay down his life for Father if need be. After a preliminary cup of coffee we went in to dinner. I was met at the door by an Arab with a dish in his hand, and



THE FELLAH AND HIS RIVER.

a greasy bit of soap. I did not see the water and towel behind, at first, and thought he was offering me an appetiser. I was wondering how on earth I was going to



attack it, when I fortunately saw the water, and realised I was to wash my hands. We had a dinner of ten courses, and the Mudir would not hear of our refusing a single thing. If by an unlucky chance we said that it

was good, he implored us, "for his sake," to have some more, and nearly wept if we did not. The Mudir and his brother began eating with knives and forks; but they looked most awkward, and the brother soon had recourse to his fingers, though the Mudir bravely struggled on with knife and fork. We made up our minds to try with our fingers too, the poor Mudir looked so unhappy; but when the next course came—Irish stew with a lot of gravy and very greasy potatoes—we could not bring ourselves to the point.

After dinner there was more talk and more civilities, and the Mudir promised, as a great favour, to come and see us in England. Then we rode home, accompanied by a very smart lantern-bearer.

CAMP, BIR ARRAS :

Thursday, February 16, 1893.

Here we are in our first camp, which we reached about an hour ago.

We started from Keneh early this morning. The

loading up was a lengthy and noisy operation. Our camels, which were all lying down to be loaded, were roaring and groaning, while the cameleers jabbered and



THE AWKWARD MOMENT.

expostulated at the tops of their voices. At last everything was ready, and we proceeded to mount—a most alarming operation. The saddles are quite flat, and perched on the top of the hump. My camel knelt

down, and his owner put his foot on the animal's knee to prevent his rising, while I climbed up in fear and trembling, and waited in dreadful suspense, not knowing which end of the animal meant to get up first. After several fearful lurches, in the course of which I violently clutched, first the back, and then the front of the saddle, to prevent myself shooting over its head, or slipping over its tail, I was astonished to find myself safely up. Our caravan consists of twenty-nine camels, including one woolly long-legged baby, and a donkey.

After riding through the narrow streets of Keneh, where we were a great excitement to the inhabitants, we soon left all civilisation behind. The desert stretched away in front of us, with low hills on our right and mountains in the distance. The camels go fearfully slow—only two and a half miles an hour—but we didn't find them uncomfortable when we got used to them; though the donkey makes a pleasant change. We have had an easy day to begin with, and are only fourteen miles from Keneh. It has been very hot all day, especially when we



WHERE THE DESERT MEETS THE RIVER

halted for luncheon, which we ate in the open desert, as there was not a scrap of shade anywhere.

The mirages* were most extraordinary. One sees beautiful blue lakes, in the surface of which mountains and palm trees are reflected, with islands and rushes at the edge, but, on near approach, they change and vanish in the most tantalising way. Our camp is pitched just under a low rocky hill; there are a few stunted mimosa bushes growing on sandy mounds all round, the only vegetation of any sort. It was very exciting watching the tents being put up, and our camp looks so comfortable. The poor camels seemed very pleased to get their loads off, and are thoroughly enjoying a feed. We have brought some unfortunate sheep and turkeys with us, as well as chickens and pigeons. They must be thankful to have got into camp, as they looked perfectly miserable, especially the poor turkeys, who were tied on by their legs with their heads dangling down.

* The mirage is caused by a thin layer of vapour; hence the phenomenon is most frequent within a few miles of the Nile. Further into the desert, where there is less moisture, we seldom saw it.

We have just been dining outside, in the delicious crisp air. It was pitch dark, but the camp was lighted by Chinese lanterns. The dinner which our old black cook produced was beyond expectation. He works harder than anybody in camp and is extraordinarily active. It was so funny to see him clamber on to his camel's neck as it was going along. He looked very ridiculous in knickerbockers and a very tight white waistcoat, and an enormous white pith hat to protect his complexion.

MEDISA VALLEY, KITTAH MOUNTAINS :

February 19, 1893.

We reached our first camp in the mountains this afternoon, after an easy journey of four days across the desert, which I enjoyed tremendously. It is most exciting to be here, and we are having grand fun. We generally had breakfast about five, and managed to get off by seven in the morning, and reached camp at three or four o'clock in the afternoon.

Starting so early we always had a good walk of two or three hours in the cool of the morning, and, as the grit is beaten hard and smooth in the camel tracks all the



way, it was very easy going. I did not get at all tired of the camel-riding, and, after a time, preferred it to the donkey. I spent a good deal of the time reading, as

the desert gets rather monotonous sometimes, there being no sign of life anywhere.

We got our first view of the mountains from our second camp at Kasr el Jinn.* They presented a grand outline of jagged peaks, and were bright pink in the evening light; while the desert is all sorts of colours, purple, red and yellow, according to the light. To-day we got into the low hills at the foot of the mountains, a refreshing change after the stretch of flat desert we had passed. There were gazelle tracks everywhere, and we saw two in the distance, such lovely little beasts, bounding along over the low mimosa bushes.

The camping is glorious fun. We live in the greatest luxury, and M. and I are quite disappointed we don't have to rough it more. There are five tents—the saloon, kitchen, and three sleeping tents. We have a very cosy little tent with low camp beds. The mess it gets into is something fearful, as there is nowhere to put any-

* "The Castle of the Spirit"—one of the Roman fortified stations, established to protect a *hydrem* or water tank. These are all choked with sand at the present day.

thing away, and our clothes are strewn in all directions. It is amusing watching the pitching of camp at the end of each day.

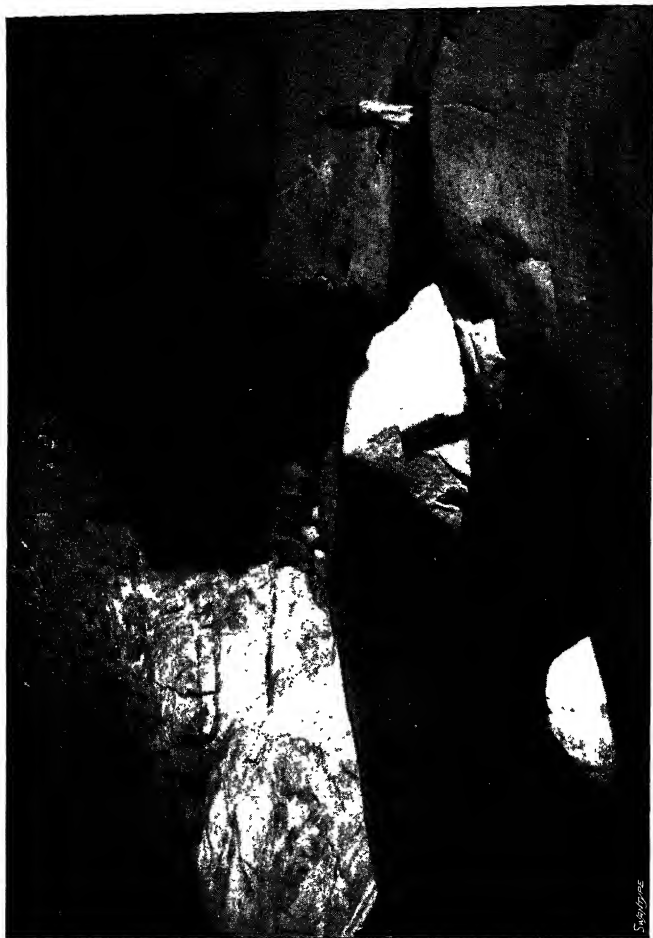
Our Bedawin camel-drivers form several little camps, and of course have no protection all night, and they must find it bitterly cold, as we are now at a rather high elevation. They sit in groups round their fires, which look very cheerful after dark. They are very simple-minded, warm-hearted folk, and always willing to do us a service. Their long flowing garments are of all sorts of colours, and on their heads they have a tight-fitting cap, with a bright handkerchief bound round it. Most of them carry handsome long guns, which look several hundred years old.

One of the men is the most ragged creature I have ever seen. His one garment is simply a mass of tags, and so rotten that wherever he goes he sheds bits of it. Another has a lovely shawl of green and brown, which Father and I covet very much. Our chief cameleer, Garnim, is a handsome man, and looks very imposing

on a tall, and nearly white, fast-trotting camel. The Bedawin have a way of singing which annoys me very much. They jabber away on three notes—and those



are out of tune—as loud as they can, until I am nearly driven wild. Selim, the dragoman, is worse than any of them : he sings all day long, and I am sorely tempted to throw a book at his head sometimes.



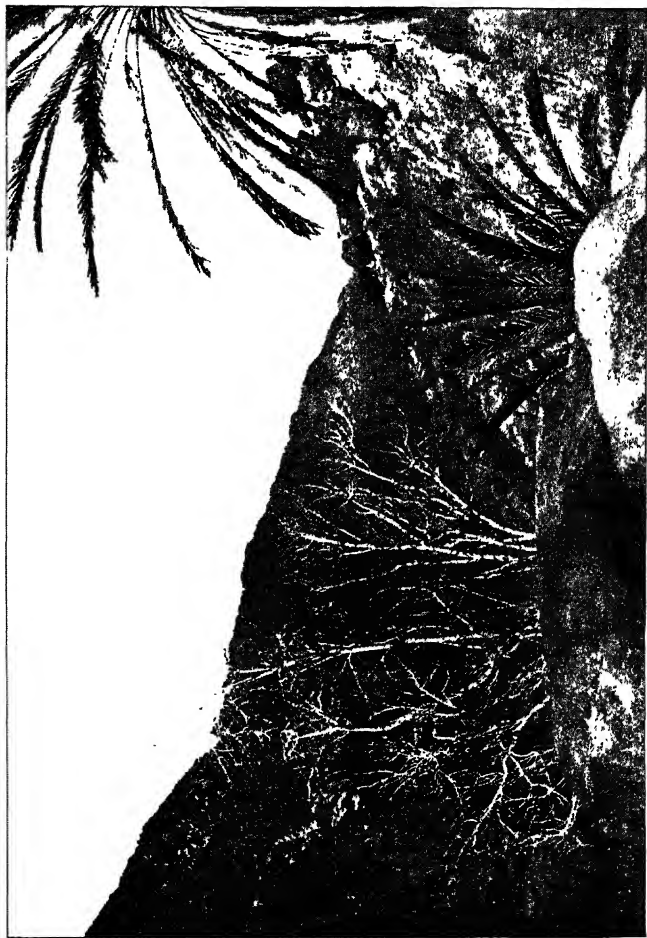
THE POOL AT MEDISA.

Our camp here is in a broad sandy wadi at the foot of the mountains, which are very steep, and look rather difficult climbing. We are about 1800 feet above the sea, and the highest peaks are six thousand. As soon as our camp was pitched, we found our way up to the watering place, the first reached since Keneh. It is a lovely pool of water* in a basin of red granite, some way up a narrow gorge in the mountains, and was a refreshing sight after four days of desert. The poor camels have some difficulty in reaching it, as the valley is filled with great boulders, but they must have enjoyed their first drink. It is good to feel we have got an abundant supply of water at last, as on the journey we had to carry all we wanted with us, and were made to use it very sparingly. We were allowed a pint and a half for the evening wash, and this had to be carefully treasured up till the next morning!

C. E. B.

* There are many such pools in these mountains, but it is only those which are accessible from the valley and which never dry up that are of practical use. Though bright and clear they are often dangerously foul, from the multitude of animals which have resorted to them, and the water should always be boiled before use.

Father and I had a splendid climb on Tuesday, from Medisa, and got higher up into the mountains than we have been yet. He and C. and I started soon after five, while it was still dark, and began by creeping up a lovely little wadi, half choked here and there by great blocks of pink granite. A few dried-up bushes and wild figs grew in the bottom. Here Father spied all the morning, but saw no fresh sign of ibex. It was such a thankless task that he gave it up after lunch, and he and I started for a climb instead. The peak we selected looked very tempting, and the top seemed so near and easy to reach; but we had a tougher climb than we had bargained for, and were baulked at every turn by deep little ravines which crossed our line. We had surmounted quite half-a-dozen of these obstacles, hoping that each would be the last, and the top of our peak was almost reached, when we came upon yet another ravine, ten times steeper than all the rest. It was impossible to cross it, except by going miles round, and as it was getting late we had to leave our peak unvanquished. But it was a splendid



THE WILD FIG

climb and well worth doing. We got a grand view of the surrounding country, and overtopped most of the peaks around. Our Bedawi, Salaam, who is very superstitious, was in a great fright lest we should remain out after dark. He had been groaning all the way, and was much relieved when we turned downwards. We had a long walk home, and the sun was setting as we came over the hill down to camp. Yesterday we were quite glad to spend most of our day on camel and donkey-back, on our way to Kittar.

H M. B.



CHAPTER VI.

WADI KITTAR.

WADI KITTAR: *February 23, 1893.*

WE are now at Kittar, in the heart of the mountains. This wadi is more shut in than Medisa. It is flat and sandy, but surrounded with fine granite peaks, which rise to a height of about six thousand feet. By the time we had reached it our live stock had quite recovered from their desert journey, and we had a most lively farm-yard. The turkeys especially were very loud in their expressions of

satisfaction. We found all the animals rather too curious concerning the insides of our tents. One old sheep, in particular, has taken a great fancy to our bedroom, and the turkeys and chickens are always prying into the corners. Even the camels sometimes poke in inquiring heads. They are a great amusement to Selim, who sits watching them nearly all day. He called us out of our tent this morning to see what he called "a wonderful scenery"—a very funny fight between a sheep and a turkey. The evenings are now so much warmer, and the moonlight so brilliant, that we have our dinner outside the tent, where we amuse ourselves with watching the gambols of the baby camel.

This morning C. and I stayed in camp and tried our hands at cooking cakes, which was a great excitement to all the Arabs, and we had quite an audience. Selim stood over us, making most extraordinary suggestions. I think it was a case of "too many cooks," for one of the Arabs' dogs was the only creature who would touch our cakes.

That performance over, we made our way to the Kittar waterfall, one of the rare pools in these mountains. It was about a mile from camp, up a deep and narrow gorge carved out by the occasional torrents which tear madly down after a sudden storm. It was a lovely pool at the foot of a waterfall, and the overhanging rocks were covered with maiden-hair fern and luxuriant grasses, though there was at the time we visited it a scarcely perceptible trickle of water.

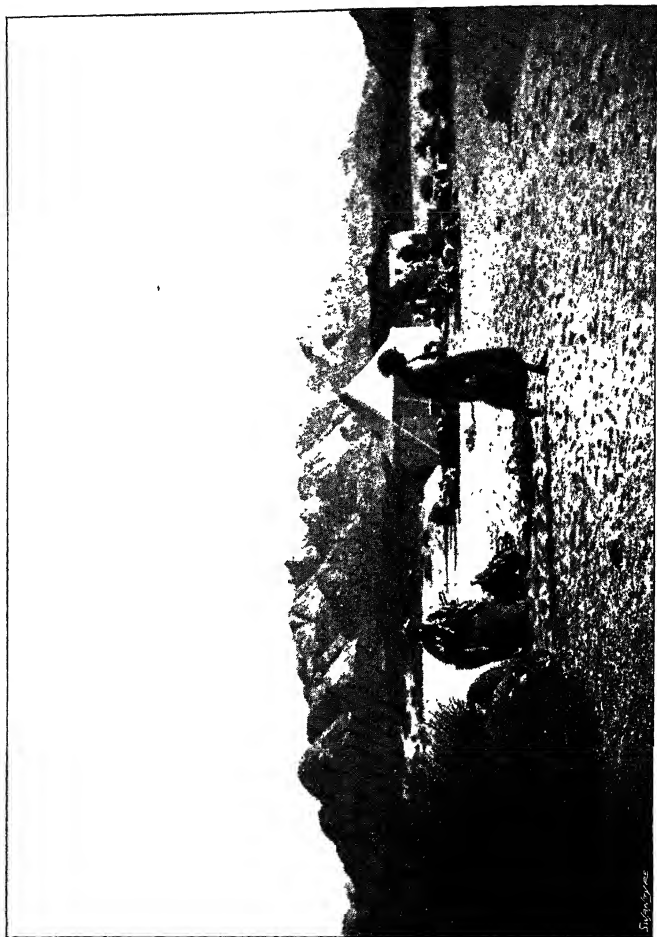
We had a delightful plan of making an extra camp here and sleeping *al fresco* under the rocks, but it never came off. Here we met Father in the afternoon; he had seen nothing. When we reached camp we found G. home before us. He had seen and had had a shot at two galloping ibex, which he had missed. He was very disappointed, but we all went to bed that night happier as far as hunting was concerned, for it was something to know that the animals existed.

February 27.

Next day the two hunters were off again in the dark, after 4.30 breakfast. C. and I lay in bed till six and felt quite dissipated. We had determined to do some mountaineering, so after breakfast we started up a peak opposite our camp, accompanied by a Bedawi, to carry our lunch, and Selim, who always insisted on coming too, though we preferred going without him; but that expedition quite cooled his ardour, and he never even wished to come again. We had a hot clamber up the peak, which took us about two-and-a-half hours, Selim groaning and grumbling in the rear. Being anything but a keen mountaineer, he thought us very mad, but it was well worth the effort. Near the top, through a gap in the mountains to the north-east, we suddenly came in full view of the Red Sea, with Mount Sinai beyond—an unexpected revelation. The view was still better from the top. Between our mountains and the sea was a stretch, twenty miles wide, of yellow sandy desert. The sea itself

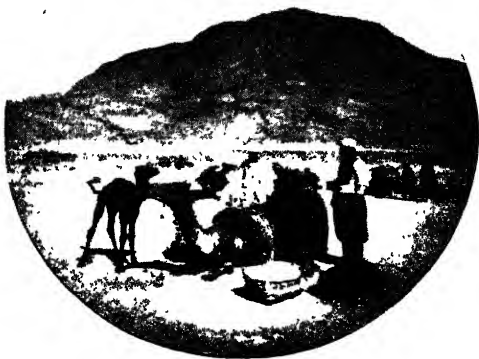
was a most gorgeous blue, and the bright little islands of sand dotted about were just caught by the sunlight beyond it was the outline, faint, but distinct, of the Sinai Mountains.

H. M. B.



CAMP AT MEDISA.

5/10/1912



THE PET OF THE FAMILY.

CHAPTER VII.

THE PORPHYRY MOUNTAINS.

BADIA : *February 27, 1893*

As far as the hunting was concerned, Kittar was not a greater success than Medisa. Neither G. nor Father have seen anything more, so they decided to move camp again the following morning to Badia, on the eastern side

of the mountains, about ten miles from Kittar. This camp is near the foot of Jebel Dukhán, the "mountain of smoke," which contains the porphyry quarries worked by the Romans. They have lain idle and deserted more than two thousand years. They were worked entirely by convicts, over whom a strict watch, of course, had to be kept; and our camp is close to an old Roman fort, the walls of which still remain. They were evidently partial to shell-fish of all descriptions.* The ground is strewn with shells and broken bits of pottery. From here we are only twelve miles from the Red Sea, which we can see from the foot-hills round our camp; it looks only a short stroll down to the shore. Though this part is now absolutely dry and waterless, there are evidences of mighty torrents from time to time in all the wadis.

From near our camp a Roman path, marked with heaps of stones on each side at regular intervals, leads to a gap

* Probably the only food produced in the neighbourhood. All other supplies must have been brought, as at the present day, from the Nile. Vegetation is so scanty that these mountains support only a few small flocks of sheep.

in the ridge of Jebel Dukhán, and, over the shoulder, to the valley of the porphyry quarries. As a Sabbath day's journey, it was determined that we should go over to see these mines, taking provisions for one night with us, as we intended to sleep out under some friendly rock.

Early yesterday morning we started off, accompanied by a Bedawi, and Mahomet, a most obliging Arab, whose functions in camp combine those of scullery-maid and housemaid. It was far more amusing going without Selim to interpret, and to have a chance of airing our very scanty Arabic a little, for we had not the moral courage to do it before him. Neither of our attendants could speak English except Mahomet, and his knowledge of the language is not very extensive, his vocabulary consisting of three words, "lunch" and "too much." There are always, according to him "too much" ibex and "too much" water. Unfortunately, we have not found either of these statements quite correct. Our conversation with him and the Bedawi was carried on chiefly by means of violent gesticulations, in which all these people excel.

We had a hot climb to the top of the pass in the morning, with the sun full on our backs. The Roman path is still in wonderful preservation. We passed many remains of watch towers.* The poor convicts were evidently most closely watched. At the top of the pass we read the morning service in full view of the Red Sea and Mount Sinai. Here we stayed some time, studying the geography of the place.

The valley into which we were looking is of a long, horse-shoe shape, surrounded with high mountains. There are two large porphyry quarries, high up near the tops of the ridges which enclose the valley, one on each side of it. At the bottom of the valley, two thousand feet below, are the ruins of a town, where the workmen lived, with the remains of a temple, a well and the overseer's house, in which the pillars of his courtyard are still standing. All round the quarries, too, are the remains of workmen's

* As the series of *hydremata*, or water tanks, which extended in Roman times from the Nile to the quarries, were guarded, no man could cross the hundred miles of waterless desert unaided by camels, and escape must have been practically impossible.

houses. It is said that thousands of people once lived in this valley, which is now arid and completely desolate.

That was two thousand years ago, and since then, as far as we could make out, only four parties of travellers have visited the place, and they have all taken care to inscribe their names on the ruins of the temple. These porphyry quarries are the only ones that have ever been worked.

After lunch we began the descent into the valley, meaning to climb up to one of the quarries and examine it before night. But on the way we suddenly heard one of the dogs that our Bedawi had brought with him, giving tongue, and then perceived both of them half-way up the opposite mountain in pursuit of two ibex. Porphyry mines and the rest were, of course, instantly forgotten. The Bedawi started off in wild excitement, G. with his rifle vainly endeavouring to keep pace with him, while Father, C. and I watched from below. The dogs soon had one of the ibex at bay on a steep rock half-way up the hill, but it proved to be only a poor little female. G., naturally, had no desire to shoot her, which made the

Bedawi furious, and they had a row royal, each storming away in his own language. G. held on his way in pursuit of the male ibex he had seen further up the mountain. Then the Bedawi, Salaam, came back to persuade Father to kill her. He, of course, was equally obdurate, but tried to get close enough to photograph her. This the goat could not stand, and, jumping down, was pursued by the dog, who, the ground being easy, actually caught and held her without doing her much injury.* Salaam quickly came up and seized her. He tied up her legs with bits of his own garment, which he could not well afford to spare. Then he and Father, between them, carried her down to the valley. Now the question was, what we should do with her? Father had some thoughts of taking her home and presenting her to the Zoo, but when we thought of the long desert ride, and other diffi-

* The poor little goat was shortly to become a mother. She could easily climb where no dog could follow; but when she lost her head, and left her stronghold, she was soon outpaced. I think this case of an adult ibex being taken alive, and practically uninjured, must be unique.

culties of the journey, we gave up the idea and decided to let her go. Salaam objected strongly at first, for he rightly considered her his property, but he was pacified with a small baksheesh; and then we had the satisfaction of untying her, and seeing her trot off, apparently none the worse. G. failed to find the other ibex—which was to be expected.

Two camels, which had been sent round by the valley, with some coverings and provisions, had meanwhile arrived, and we now turned our attention to fixing our camp for the night. We chose a sheltered place near the ruins of the town. Our bed-room was a soft strip of sand under a projecting cliff, which made a very good wardrobe. We ate our dinner sitting round a camp fire, we on one side and our Bedawin on the other, a candle being stuck in the sand, though it was quite unnecessary, as the moonlight was brilliant enough without any other light. When we had had our supper the Bedawin set to work to cook theirs. They made a huge flat slab of dough of barley flour, and, after the most vigorous kneading and

thumping, put it in the sand and covered it with ashes. There it remained for some time. I can't say it looked tempting when it reappeared. G.- was brave enough to



THEIR OWN FIRESIDE.

try some, and pronounced it very good. Then we turned in under the most glorious moonlight, bright enough to read by without a candle; and it was delicious lying

there with nothing between us and the sky. We came to the conclusion that tents are superfluous luxuries in this climate. At least, this *al fresco* camp was the one we liked best, and, by sharing our meals and our fire with our Bedawin, we got on more friendly terms with them.

At sunrise G. went off hunting; and, soon after, Father, C. and I started to clamber up to the porphyry quarry in the western ridge. This we might have reached by one of the old Roman paths; but we had been asked to explore a certain ravine, to see if it contained water, and this led over very rough ground, so that the ascent took three hours. On the way we discovered some ancient workmen's huts not previously observed, and by them a piece of hard black diorite, which had been used to sharpen their tools upon. At last we reached the quarry, and examined the old rock faces from which the precious stone was removed, and the inclined planes down which it was lowered.

We discovered several wedge-holes in lines in the rocks, blocks of porphyry partly worked, and fragments of

pillars which strewed the ground, and there were other signs of hasty evacuation of the quarries. Most of the porphyry is red or purple, with white spots ; there is also some green. The Romans prized the purple the most, as coming nearest to the Imperial purple in colour, but also on account of its rarity and extreme hardness. They were the only people who ever worked this quarry. The ancient Egyptians appear never to have discovered it. It is chiefly in some of the great Turkish mosques and the churches * of Italy that it is now found, the Roman temples, for which it was originally fetched, having been plundered to decorate them. The saying, "born in the purple," originated from this porphyry, the walls of the birth chamber of one of the Eastern emperors being lined with it.

We sat there under the shade of a big rock for some time, looking out over the wide area of sea and mountain ; but it was a long walk back to our tents, and we had to

* There are some circular plaques of it in Westminster Abbey, sections, probably, of ancient columns.



make the descent into the valley while the sun was still blazing down on our heads. Then we had a long climb over the shoulder again, and reached our tents in the evening, tired, thirsty and foot-sore, but having thoroughly enjoyed our expedition.

H. M. B.



UNPACKING.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE RETURN JOURNEY.

UM DELPHI: *March 3, 1893.*

At Munfia, the next camp to Badia, Father and G. worked hard on the mountains, but without success. They saw plenty of tracks, but in this climate these remain a long while unless obliterated by the wind. We think the

Arabs have been hunting the ibex with dogs, which is their custom,* and this drives them clean away. We constantly notice tracks, not only of ibex, but of camels, men, donkeys, sheep, dogs and gazelle, but, curiously enough, we hardly ever come across the owners. Here they have also industriously hunted without any result, until we thought we had had enough of Munfia, and moved camp. We are now on our way to Fatireh, at the south side of the mountains; but to reach it from Munfia, we have had to make a great detour towards the sea to avoid a steep pass, for loaded camels are very clumsy beasts at climbing, and tumble about in the most awkward fashion among rocks.† As it was, we had one rather rough little pass to cross,

* The dog, finding a fresh spoor, or sighting the animal, follows it until it takes refuge on a cliff, and his master, guided by the barking, is generally able to effect an approach to close quarters. They have another method of hunting, which is to lie in ambush in little stone huts, built near the watering places to which the animals are known to resort.

† Mr. Rudyard Kipling's guard-room hero thus sums up the animal's demerits :—

“’E ’il gall, an’ chafe, an’ lame, an’ fight—’e smells most awful vile ;
’E ’il lose ’isself for ever if yer let him stray a mile ;
’E ’s game to graze the ’ole day long, an’ ’owl the ’ole night through,
An’ when ’e comes to greasy ground, ’e splits ’isself in two.”

which puzzled them not a little. Our troop looked uncomfortable, but very pretty, winding its way up and down the zigzag path.

On Wednesday, C. and I started out hunting with Father. We had a hot and thirsty climb up a wadi to the top of a ridge, where we sat for some time looking on to the Red Sea. Father had been spying most diligently the whole way, but as usual had seen nothing. He spied without success all the morning. After lunch, C. and I came back, finding our way down another very steep wadi, full of big boulders which it took some climbing and scrambling to get over. We had quite an exciting climb, and got very hot and thirsty over it, and it was most refreshing to come suddenly upon a pool of delicious water, deep down among the rocks. The local Arab hunter, Saloame, who was with Father on this occasion, utterly refused to leave the head of the wadi till he had seen that we were safely over the steepest places. When they came down in the evening, Father said it was pretty to see this Bedawi's anxiety. He made a detour to make

sure, by our tracks, that we had come out of the ravine safely.*

Our camp last night was such a picturesque one—a stretch of sand lay between us and the Red Sea, with a few low hills on the right hand and on the left, and high peaks behind us. The sea, though really six or seven miles off, looked quite close. It was a lovely colour in the evening glow, and it looked tempting for a paddle after our hot ride. It was a glorious evening, very warm, and there was such a splendid full moon that we went to bed by her light and got up by it this morning. When we started, after 4.30 breakfast, it was still brilliant; a lovely red glow soon began to spread over the sea, and we each had two shadows, one cast by the moon, and the other by the anti-glow which precedes the dawn. That sunrise was one of the most glorious things I have ever

* The Bedawin are acute observers of tracks. It is said that they recognise after years have passed the impression of a foot which they have seen but once. We found the Maazeh tribe of Bedawin very considerate towards ladies, and solicitous for their comfort. It is unlikely that this Arab had ever seen European ladies before, and their independence somewhat alarmed him.

seen. We four walked on before our camels were ready, and scrambled some way up the mountain side, and sat there, waiting for the sun to make his appearance, which he did at length, quite suddenly, with a burst of flame tinting the rocks around us a soft rosy pink.

We have had a delicious ride since then in the cool of the morning ; and, perched up on a camel, you survey the world and get all the breezes that are blowing. Our chief excitement was a flock of sheep, the first we had seen, tended by two little Arab girls. Two of our Bedawin, directly they saw them, flew off, and most affectionate embraces followed, while our camels were left to their own devices. I like to see the way the Arabs greet any of their own tribe whom they happen to meet in these mountains. They rush into one another's arms, and touch foreheads and salute in such a pretty way.

We had intended to push on further to-day, but when we got here we thought it such a tempting camp we pitched our tents at once. The mountains round, too, look promising hunting-ground, so the gentlemen are going to

try once more for ibex, and, if they find nothing, we shall go on to Um Anab, which is further south, to-morrow.



UNDER THE SACRED TREE.

We finished our day's journey by 9 o'clock A.M., and had lunch about the time that most of the civilised world, I suppose, was sitting down to breakfast. I think this is

one of the prettiest camps we have made yet. We are now all sitting under the shade of a big mimosa tree, the first one worthy of the name that we have seen since we left Keneh. In front of us stretches a broad, sandy wadi with lovely peaks in the distance. We have now turned southwest again, and have left the Red Sea behind us. We have had it very hot lately in the middle of the day—from ten to three the sun is grilling—but the early mornings and evenings are quite perfect. We find that the harsh treatment to which our clothes are subject with all the moving of camp, and the wear and tear of climbing these sharp rocks, is bringing them to a speedy end, and we shall be reduced to rags before we get to Cairo.

UM ANAB :

Sunday, March 5, 1893.

Father had a good spy on the mountains by Um Delphi, but saw no beasts, though they found some apparently fresh beds. Since we have left it, those tantalising Arabs say it is a splendid place and full of



NOONDAY HEAT

ibex. If they had said so when we were there, it would have been more to the point; but they found it suited their own purposes best to decry it, as they wished to push on to Um Anab, where there is more water for their camels. That is the one thing they care about.

This camp is quite different to any we had before. It is in a narrow part of the wadi, with high cliffs on each side, and close by are three or four pools of water, with forget-me-nots growing round them, and *a green bank of grass*, which is quite a novelty. We enjoyed seeing our camels have a good drink; and the donkey, and our one remaining sheep, spent a very happy afternoon nibbling at the grass, though they had to take it in turns. We live on such familiar terms with all our live stock, that it is rather sad to see our friends disappearing one by one. Our old sheep, especially, is most friendly—a good deal too pushing sometimes—and when he scents a meal there is no getting rid of him.

Beyond our camp, and further up the wadi, was a

little settlement of Ababdeh Arabs. They are a different race from the Maazeh, the tribe to which our Arabs belong, and their appearance is much wilder; their



MID-DAY REST.

skins are darker, and they have great masses of tangled, woolly hair. The greeting between the Ababdeh and our Arabs was always rather cold and distant, and though

there is no actual strife between the two tribes, I believe they will have nothing to do with one another.

We went to pay them a visit this morning, but our advances were not received very cordially. The women and children especially were shy, and hastily retired to their tents, where they sat with their backs to us. We tried to propitiate them with chocolates, which the children were only too ready for, but their mammas promptly threw them away. The men were more inclined to be sociable, after a bit, and we made friends over the camera, which excited them a great deal.

This tribe use tents, or rather huts, of mats made of plaited palm leaves—a sign, I think, of the scantiness of their flocks.

March 6.

We moved camp a little way to-day, hoping to find better ground, but there are nothing but foot-hills all round, which are like dust heaps, and no good; and even the Arabs say there are no Taytal here. So we

are going to the famous old granite quarries of *Mons Claudianus* near here, which will be all on our way home to Keneh.

We shall leave the mountains and begin our ride across the desert on Tuesday, reaching Keneh on Friday afternoon. Delightful as this expedition has been, and much as we have enjoyed our camping-out life, we must now give up hope of the ibex, and it is very annoying not to have got what we came for.

There has been a tremendous wind all night, and we still expect our tents down on us every moment. Everything is deluged in sand, and we cannot keep it out of anything.

NEAR JIDDAMA : *Tuesday, March 7, 1893.*

We are now on our way back to Keneh, and are having our mid-day rest after five hours' camel-ride this morning. After to-day we have still three long days' ride before us. We are keeping to the granite mountains as long as we can, which makes the distance rather

greater than if we went straight across the desert, but it is much more interesting. We have been riding along narrow wadis through foot-hills, which look like huge ash-heaps, most of the morning. We are most heartily sick of them, as we have not seen much else these last few days; and it was a great relief a short while back to come out on a broad sandy plain, with distant views of higher peaks.

Yesterday we only made a short move. On our way, we paid a visit to some old granite quarries, which had, like the porphyry quarries, been worked by the Romans, and not touched since they left them. There were the remains of a Roman town, with its well and temple, and huge pillars and fragments of pillars lying about near to where they were hewn from the rock. Apparently, when finished, these pillars have been found too big to move. We found in the quarry some pedestals nearly ten feet in diameter. There are several quarries round here, all of this same granite, which is white speckled with black, and was called by the Romans the "starling-winged"

granite. We had to camp early in the afternoon for the Arabs to send back for water to Um Anab, as they do not expect to find any more before reaching Keneh.

Last evening our one remaining sheep was presented to the Arabs, and departed this life. We quite miss him, especially at meal times, when he always made himself particularly agreeable.

On Sunday night we had a great gale. Father's tent was blown down on to him as he slept. Tables and everything loose were upset, and many of our belongings went flying over the plain. Most of these were recovered, but G.'s sponge travelled too far, and was never seen again.

Thursday, March 9.

Here we are at our last camp before Keneh, and are enjoying a real old-fashioned sand-storm as a finish-up to our desert experiences. It began about 2.30, and when we saw it coming we pitched camp in all haste, but not quite in time. In a few minutes everything was

deep in sand, and it has been getting worse and worse. The air is so thick that we can only see a few yards in front of us. It is like the densest and yellowest of London fogs. There is a fearful wind. We dare not open our boxes, for, if we did, everything inside them would be filled with fine sand. One can understand now how even the rocks are sand-worn. G.'s tent has succumbed already, and we are expecting the others to follow suit every minute.

To-morrow we get to Keneh, and return to civilisation. Pretty objects we shall be for society, especially after this final trial. Everything is full of grit, our clothes are torn, and our skirts stained many colours.

It has been a dreary march to-day, much the dreariest we have had, monotonous lines of sand-hills on each side of us all the way. Yesterday, also, we had a long day's march. To our astonishment, Selim, who is generally fonder of his bed than anybody, woke us all at 3.15. The baggage camels were packed, and all was ready by 4.30. We rode along, with high cliffs on each side, and

fine rocks which looked very striking in the moonlight. We went through a gap in the Jiddama Mountains, where Father was anxious to find out if water existed or not. He had been told by a good authority that there was some, but the Arabs contradicted this. The wadi, which was said to contain the water, was rather out of our way, so we sent the baggage camels on while we explored it. It proved to be the most picturesque gorge we had seen anywhere. The cliffs were magnificent, and the veins of granite were of all colours and varieties. There was a great deal of a brilliant pink granite, with a darker pink line, which was new to us, and which we thought more beautiful even than the porphyry or the "starling-winged" granite, but there were no signs of its ever having been quarried. There was also abundance of water—rather dirty stuff, but our camels and men seemed to relish it. After lunch there, we rode straight on for more than six hours, from 10.30 to 5 o'clock, and we were uncommonly glad when our tents at last hove in sight. The weather has been most kind to us on this journey home, and we



JIDDAMA RAVINE.

5/10/1912

have had a cool breeze every day, which has helped us along on our long marches. We slept till nearly six this morning, and felt quite dissipated.

Our camels have been so much livelier coming home, and we have occasionally got them into a trot. G.'s is the most skittish. It took to buck-jumping the other day. He was hurled on to its neck, but stuck to him well. But poor R., when his beast did the same, soon came to grief, and was landed on his back, luckily in a soft sandy place, and, except for a few bruises, was none the worse.

Dinner is just over, and we have eaten with it a large portion of grit and sand. We think we shall all lie in the saloon tent to-night, as that seems the firmest.

KENEH: *March 11, 1893.*

After all, the storm quite subsided when we went to bed, and we feel quite glad we have seen *one*, but never wish to be in another.

We reached Keneh yesterday at two o'clock, after a

few hours' ride, feeling very dishevelled and untidy. Our Arabs' spirits rose steadily as they got nearer, and their joy found vent in extraordinary antics and capers; and when at last the palm trees of Keneh came in sight, on the other side of a beautiful mirage which reflected them, they all began singing and shouting at the tops of their voices. One of our Arabs had gone on beforehand, and had announced our approach, and there was quite an excitement when we arrived.

The father of our camel sheikh, who is rather a swell at Keneh, came out to meet us on his white donkey, and a most affectionate greeting took place between him and his son. It was refreshing to see trees and grass and birds again, after practically nothing but sand and rocks for three weeks, and everything looked dazzlingly green to our unaccustomed eyes.

H. M. B.

*

PART II.

S I N A I.

*



STROMBOLI.

CHAPTER I.

THE VOYAGE.

‘OPHIR,” NAPLES : *January 21, 1894.*

WE are comfortably settled on board, and have got luxurious cabins. We have had a good day of it, beginning at 6.30, when our train arrived in Rome. We had an hour and a half stoppage there, part of which we

spent in rushing off to the Colosseum, and all this afternoon we have been trotting round Naples. It was dull and misty, and we could not see far, and Vesuvius was in cloud all the time. We had a good tramp along the Strada Victor Emmanuel, and climbed up some steep picturesque old streets, and got a lovely view over the bay, which was clear, but we did not see Naples at its best, and the streets were in a particularly dirty condition, and swarming with beggars, of course. We came on board soon after five.

ORIENT LINE, R.M.S. "OPHIR":
January 23, 1894.

So far we have had the most perfect passage from Naples—the sea like glass, and very fine. Yesterday we were in sight of land all the way. We passed the Lipari Islands in the morning, and went quite close to Stromboli. He was smoking away, but did nothing more exciting. We went through the Straits of Messina in the afternoon. Sicily looked perfectly lovely, and I longed to stay there.

It was very warm, and we sat about in the sun or played cricket. The people on board are energetic, and they get up all sorts of entertainments: dancing, concerts, cricket, athletic sports. We had a ladies' cricket match yesterday, but the cricket was of a very feeble description: nine was the highest score made by either side. T. got into all the young ladies' bad books, by running every one of her side out, but it was entirely their own fault.

Last night we had a dance on deck: they have a very good band on board. It is difficult to keep a straight line on a slanting deck, and everybody tumbled against the railings and one another at first. To-night there is to be a concert, and all the performers are practising away now.

There are to be gentlemen's athletic sports to-day, and ladies' to-morrow, but the latter seem chiefly to consist in drawing blind pigs and threading needles. It is a perfect day again and very warm.

H. M. B.

CHAPTER II.

THE APPROACH.

Tor: *January 27, 1894.*

HERE we are at Tor, and, as we find there is a chance of sending letters by a sailing boat to-morrow, we are all sitting down to write before we start off on our camels.

At Suez we left the *Ophir* and all our good friends on board, and in the afternoon took up our quarters on the Khedivial steamer which was to bring us here.

There was a lovely sunset last night, and T. and I dashed off to do a little sketch from Suez before we started. We were off soon after five, and got here about eight this morning.

We came ashore in sailing boats—as far as we could



WE LAND AT TOR

—and were then carried ashore on the backs of natives. It was a very funny sight to see the little Arabs staggering under Father and W. They only had one man apiece, and were carried with a leg over each shoulder and holding on to their bearer's heads. We met our dragoman Joseph Hayk here, as well as the whole train of camels. I like his looks. Of course there were difficulties at first about taking the particular route which Father intends to follow, but they have been overcome. We have been spending the time, while camels have been loading, in paying duty calls, first at the branch Convent here, and then on the Governor of Tor. At the first place we sat like dummies with about five old monks staring at us. Wine glasses of brandy were first brought to us, with a dish of jam. We had to drink the brandy off *neat* and eat a spoonful of jam each. It *was* disgusting. On the top of that came coffee. After that the visit to the Governor and more coffee. Now we are sitting in the house of the Greek schoolmaster of Tor. More brandy has been brought to us, but we can do no more.

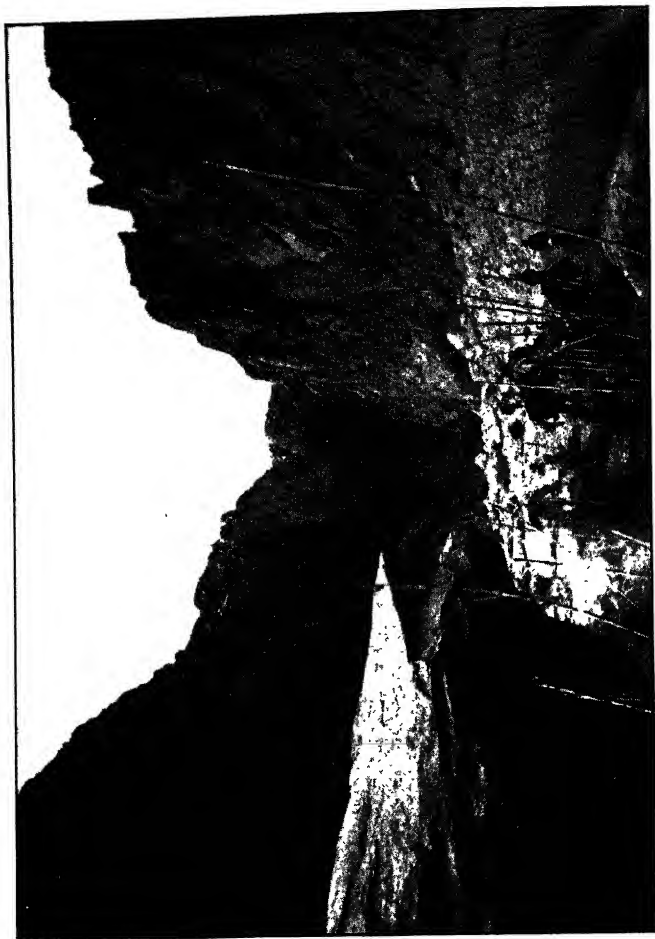
The only postman here is stone blind, so *he* will be useful. However, this schoolmaster, who can read, will see about our letters, I think.

The mountains look quite close, and we can make out nearly all the peaks. It is a lovely, fresh morning—not in the least too hot. We are going to try and get to the mountains to-night. Our dragoman has dreadfully grand ideas, and wished to prepare a hot luncheon for us to begin with.

This place is rather mean and dirty when you get to it, though it looked very pretty from a distance, with a lovely background of mountains. On the other side of the Red Sea we can just make out our dear old Kittar Mountains.

WADI ISLEH : *January 29, 1894.*

It was a lengthy operation getting our troop off from Tor, and we did not succeed in crossing the plain and reaching the mountains that day, as we had hoped. We lunched in a lovely palm grove behind Tor, close to some



WADI ISLEH

sulphurous springs, where, according to an old Arab legend, Moses healed the Israelites on some occasion when they had suffered from over-indulgence—perhaps too much manna.

We camped that night in the open plain. It was so chilly that it was not very tempting to turn out at 4.30 next morning.

Our mountains looked tantalisingly close, but it took us some hours before we reached the entrance of Wadi Isleh, which we were making for. From the plain we were able to identify nearly all the principal peaks of the range, Jebel Serbal to our left, a very fine rugged one, supposed to be above Rephidim, Jebel Um Shomar, Jebel Katherina and others.

We left the plain and entered the narrow gorge of Wadi Isleh, and camped, early in the day, in a lovely place a short distance from the opening. The Wadi, very narrow in most places, widened out here. Cliffs of black and red granite rose very steeply on each side. Near our tents was a group of palm trees, and a thick grove of very tall

yellow reeds nearly filled the bottom of the ravine, down the middle of which ran a little stream.* We had a long rest in the middle of the day, and then Father and the other two went out in different directions to spy. T. and I had a very lazy afternoon, sketching and reading. The gentlemen all had a very stiff climb, and explored the Wadi well, but with no result. There has been very little rain there lately, so that the plants had not begun to grow, and there is no food for any wild animals—or very little. All the Arabs agree in saying there is much more chance further on, so to-day we are moving again as far as we can towards Wadi Nasb, which is reputed good for ibex. We have just made our mid-day halt, and are waiting till our baggage camels catch us up. We have had a lovely ride this morning. The Wadi was generally very narrow, with huge granite cliffs on each side. . . . At one part it narrowed to a gorge not more than 8 feet across,

* In Sinai camps are generally chosen which are close to water, but it is not essential. The traveller who is provided with barrels is independent of it, as it is customary to send one or two camels long distances for the supply required.



ONE CAMEL DOWN.

Superior

with sheer precipices, on each side, of deep purple granite. Where the Wadi was broader it was filled in many places with groves of rushes and reeds, over 20 feet high, and thickets of tarfah* trees with a sort of feathery foliage. There were two or three rather bad places for the camels, and some of them fell among the boulders. They are the most clumsy climbers, and I don't know a more uncomfortable feeling than to be on their backs going up a steep place. Every leg sprawls in a different direction, and you think, each moment, they must collapse altogether, which, indeed, they not unfrequently do. They are smaller than the camels we had last year, but more comfortable, and much more willing to hurry themselves; W.'s is quite a puller. We have come very slowly this morning over the rough ground, and have only done seven miles in five hours.

Evening.—We have just pitched our camp at the

* The tamarisk. These trees have short distorted stems of immense toughness, and rooting, as they do, among boulders, are able to withstand the heaviest floods. From the twigs is exuded a kind of sweet gum, which has been identified by some with the *manna* of Scripture.

entrance of Wadi Tarfah. The last part of the way the mountains have been opening out a good deal. It was a very steep climb for the camels all the latter part of the way, and it took a long time to climb the pass at the head of the Wadi Isleh; they had to be unloaded several times. We passed one particularly exquisite group of palms, set off by the most brilliant pink granite rocks, with dark blue ones behind them: we want to go back and sketch it. The scenery is very like the Kittar Mountains, only grander, and there is far more vegetation* in the valleys, though the shrubs are for the most part very dry and prickly.

Our Arabs belong to five different tribes, and each tribe makes its separate camp, where they squat in a circle. We generally go and have a look at them all, round their fires in the evening. They are very polite to us, and willing workers. One man from these mountains has come to offer his services as a hunter, and W. goes

* The Sinaitic range is fully two thousand feet loftier than the group on the western shore of the Gulf, and therefore precipitates more water.



THE KITCHEN.

out with him. Joseph makes no difficulties about anything, and is very nice to the Arabs. He came the other day and implored piteously that Father would not take him up the mountains: that was the only thing, he said, he could not do, and the one thing we don't want him to do, so that is all right. We have got a most excellent cook—a Greek, Anastasius by name. He cooks on a long iron trough, generally at the door of the kitchen tent; and, in spite of the simplicity of his utensils, our meals are sumptuous. The dinner is always a work of art. So far we have not had it at all too hot, and to-day has been quite dull and cloudy, and it looks rather like rain.

H. M. B.

CHAPTER III.

*THE PLATEAU.*PLAIN OF RAHABEH : *January, 30, 1894.*

WE are now camped in a broad flat valley, about three hours from the Convent. The three gentlemen have all been out hunting to-day. It is now dark ; Father and W. are not home yet, which, we hope, means they have found something. Mr. C. has come in, and did not see anything. They were off at 4 this morning, leaving T. and me to come on with the camp. As this place was only about a four hours' ride from last night's camp, we spent the morning sketching the place we passed yesterday, and after lunch rode on here.

We passed an Arab encampment yesterday, and one of



DIFFICULT GROUND—A PORTAGE NECESSARY.

the Arabs showed us some splended ibex horns, which made us all very keen. We saw such a quaint, ancient drawing of one on a rock at the entrance of the first Wadi—the outline chipped out on the surface of granite—the first ibex we saw.

Hurrah! Father and W. have just come home, and Father has got a good one, so there is great excitement and much rejoicing. We were getting quite anxious about them, as it had been dark for a long time, and there were no signs of them. At last we heard a who-whoop over the hill, and all went dashing out into the dark to meet them. Father had an interesting stalk. He says the one he got was decidedly the best ram in the herd. It is such a pretty head.

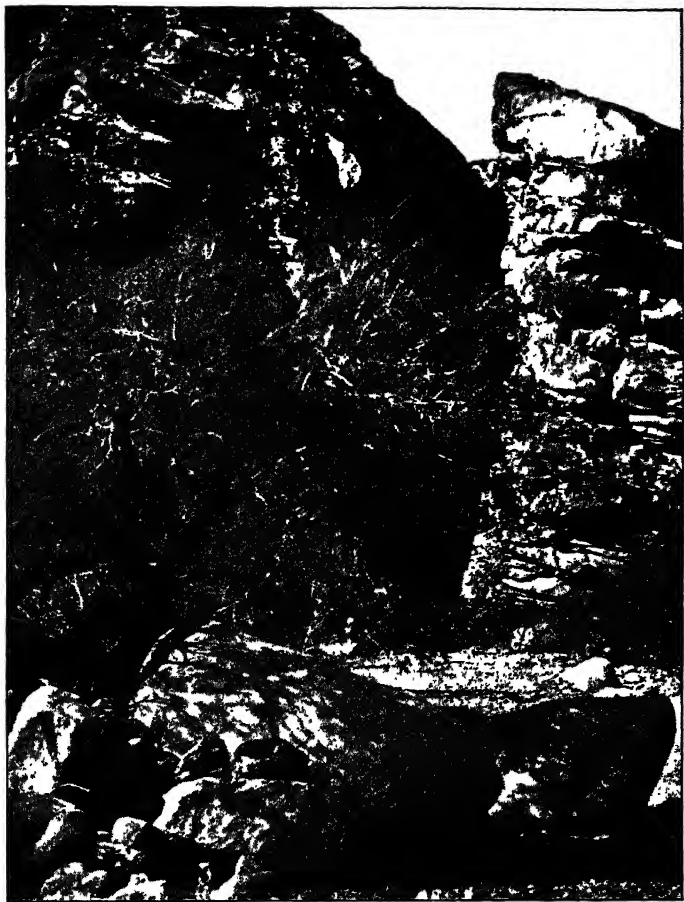
WADI NASB: *January* 31, 1894.

To-night we are a divided party: W. has stayed with Celestin at our last night's camp; Father, T. and I have come to Wadi Nasb; and Mr. C. stopped half-way. He will make a separate camp for the next few days,

and W. follows us here to-morrow. We have only had a short camel-ride to-day, but it has been a very lovely one. Wadi Nasb is full of splendid groves of tarfah trees, with very broken, rugged mountains on each side, where the granite has been much sand-worn. We are now camped by a group of tamarisk trees where four valleys meet, and we look down a splendid deep gorge with pink granite cliffs on each side. We have passed two or three encampments of Bedawin to-day, and Father is afraid they and their goats, which are all over the mountains, will have driven the ibex away. The Arabs and Mr. C. spied some ibex on the skyline to-day, close to where he camped; he was going after them this afternoon.

February 1.

We had such a thunderstorm last night. The thunder was grand, echoing in these mountains, and the lightning lit up everything beautifully. The rain came down in torrents, but our tents kept it out well, though we were always expecting them to come down on our heads. It was blowing such a gale as well.



A TARFAH TREE.

This morning we went out with Father, but came home early. It had been pouring all day, a regular Scotch wet day. A wet day in camp is not so bad as I expected it would be, but we are beginning to feel rather damp and messy. It is so impossible to dry things. Our poor Arabs look very unhappy, sitting huddled up in their wet cloaks. Father has just come in, soaking wet; he saw two ibex—females he thinks—so he did not disturb them; W. rejoined us. I expect we shall stay here a few days.

In spite of all our luxuries, we are, according to Joseph, roughing it very much. He tells us that if only we would let him have his way in everything, we should live as if we were in a first-class hotel, but we prefer to remember we are in the desert.

H. M. B.

CHAPTER IV.

WADI NASB.

W. NASB: *February 2, 1894.*

It is a bright sunny day again, an agreeable change. The rocks all round the camp are covered with tent-carpets, towels, and a varied assortment of garments, all spread out to dry. There was a sharp frost last night and the water froze in our basins. Every night I am thankful I brought the lamb-skin rug, and could do with one or two more. T. and I have had a very amusing morning; we went to pay a call on some Bedawin who have got an encampment about two miles up the valley. At first they did not appreciate our desire to sketch their tents, and tried to send us away, but we propitiated them



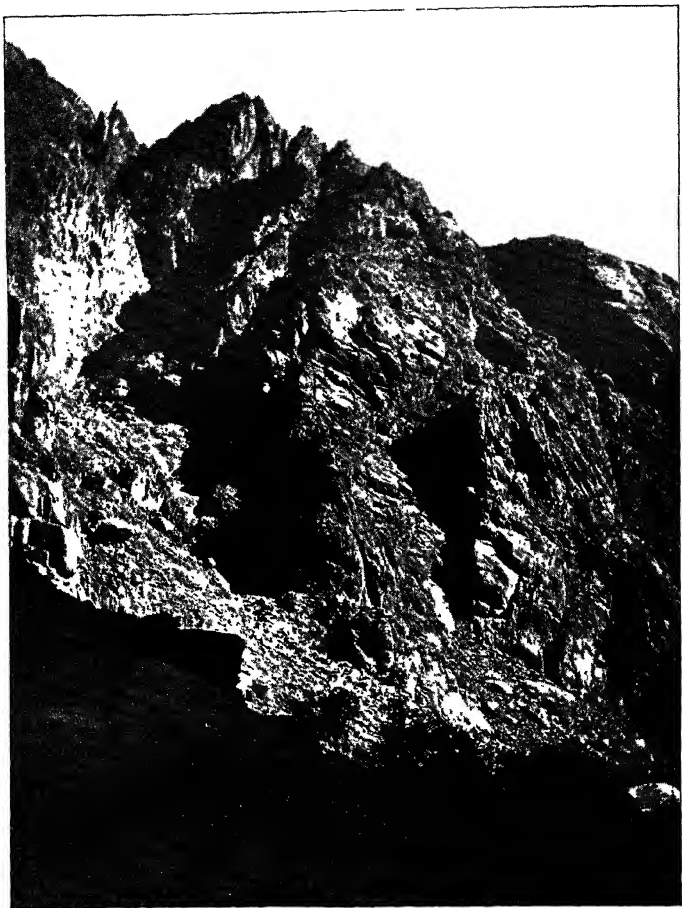
"AN ILL-FAVoured THING, SIR--BUT MINE OWN'

with figs and apples, and they became most sociable. They took us into their tents, and let us sketch and photograph them. The women were tremendously amused, and roared with laughter at our attempts to sketch them; they would not let us see more than their eyes. There were some jolly, but very dirty little children with next to no clothing, running about; one little boy was a dark and very dirty edition of G. The women were very curious over our clothes, and made us undo our jackets, and were quite surprised to find there was something else underneath, as they themselves wear only one garment. We were soon on most friendly terms, and one of the men insisted on seeing us safe back to camp.

There are a lot of partridges round here, which call from the rocks, but are difficult to see, as they match the granite exactly. Father shot two last night; they are such a lovely soft desert colour. There is a grand gorge close to this camp, and the glow of sunset on the pink granite cliffs is, I think, the finest thing I ever saw.

WADI NIMR : *February 4, 1894.*

While I was writing this letter on Friday, T. and I heard a shot in Father's direction and went off to meet him. From camp we hear every shot that is fired, when it is still, which is most exciting. He had got a small ram—such a lovely little head—and had seen several others. W. had had a tremendous tramp, but had seen nothing. That evening another hunter appeared on the scenes ; he was one Father had sent for from the Convent and had been wandering about after us for two or three days. He is rather a smart gentleman and very handsome, and is more civilised than our other Arabs, but I am not sure that that is a good thing. He wears a bright blue cloak and over that a most brilliant red shawl, and a bright striped turban on the top of all, which is not a very good costume for stalking. He has been in Cairo, and has a smattering of English, French and Italian, and crams them all into one sentence, with a word of Arabic here and there to help him along ; he is rather puzzling to



WORTH A GOOD SPY—WHATEVER!

follow. He describes the female ibex as "les made-moiselles." Yesterday we were allowed to go hunting with Father, and had a most delightful day. It was pitch dark when we started and *very* cold, with a white frost everywhere and the ground quite hard. The air was fresh and cool all day, and splendid for walking. We soon got up to a high level, and, before long, Achmet, our smart hunter, spied an ibex on the top of the ridge. We had to crawl about on our hands and knees, so as not to be seen, over very rough rocks, and we got a splendid sight of them. Father thought them all too small to shoot, so went on to spy some more. Later on we came on the same lot again, only 100 yards off, and they stood and stared at us for ever so long, especially four kids,* who in spite of several warning whistles from the old ones, would not be frightened away, even when Father waved his handkerchief at them and we all yelled. I was glad they were all too small to shoot, they looked so jolly.

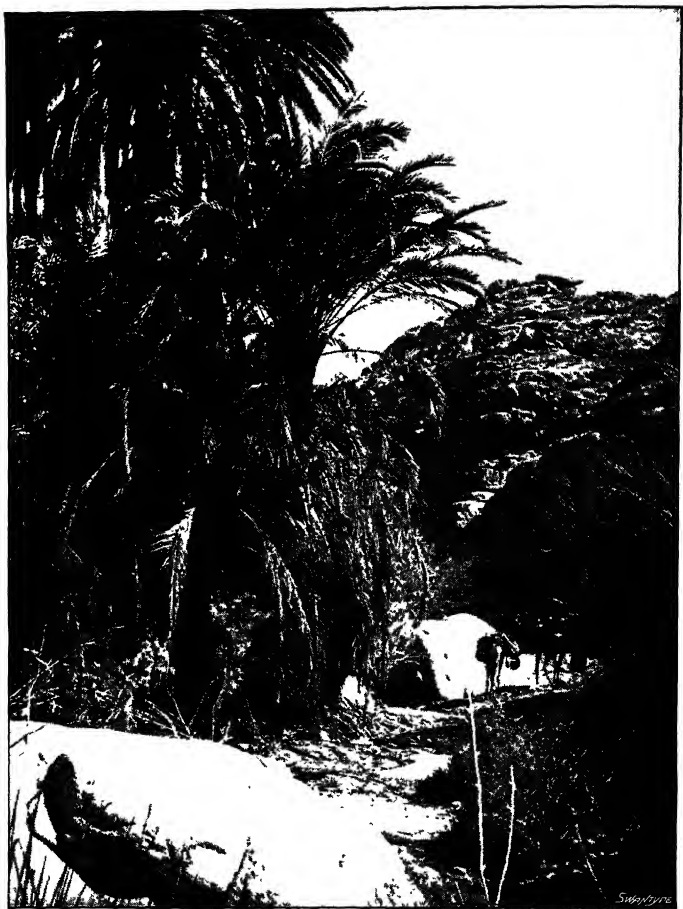
T. and I came home by ourselves in the afternoon, down

* These were adult females, which, in this species, are so small that they are easily mistaken for kids.

a very pretty little valley. It was steep, and we came upon many pools of water among the rocks, where we least expected them. Father saw a good many more ibex after we left—chiefly females—and got a running shot at rather a good male on his way back along the Wadi, but missed him. He counted twenty-three ibex that he had seen that day; W. also saw some, but only females. The nights continue excessively cold; this morning our sponges and towels were frozen as hard as bricks, and while we were at breakfast—and we had a very late one this morning, at 7 o'clock—the water in our basins froze almost to the bottom. The Arabs seem to suffer much.* When we make an early start it requires some courage to turn out of bed soon after 4 o'clock, and yet a few hours afterwards we do not know what to do, we are so grilled on the rocks.

We have been moving camp a short way to-day. We have had the most lovely walk down the ravine of

* The Bedawin, having no wool, are meanly clad in cotton. They weave their goats' hair into the black cloth from which their tents are made.



WADI NASB.

Wadi Nasb ; I wish I could describe it to you ; I never saw anything so lovely. The cliffs on each side were of the most brilliant colours, while in the Wadi itself there was a regular tangle of tropical vegetation. A delicious clear stream ran all down it, and there were groves of palm trees growing among the boulders, and tall reeds with white feathery heads, huge bunches of bulrushes, and *tarfah*, or tamarisk trees, with their bluey grey foliage, all so thick that it was quite difficult to get through, and growing to a great height.

WADI NIMR.

We have now come into quite different country. We have risen a good deal, so that all the peaks look considerably less formidable. Our camp is in a broad plain at the foot of a small hill, and we get a wide view of mountains and wadis from our tents. We have been sketching hard this evening. . . . Our life is irregular. We breakfast any time between 4.30 and 6.30. T. and I are generally later than the others if we do not go

out with Father. We have lunch generally about 11; tea about 3; dinner at 6.30; then a game of cards, and we consider ourselves dissipated if we go to bed after 8. We have made great friends with all our Arabs. Joseph has got a lot to say for himself, too. He has travelled about so much and with very interesting people. He always addresses us as "my lady."

February 6.

Yesterday we went back to Wadi Nasb to sketch. It took us most of the day. W. saw a splendid *taytal** a long way off, but did not get a chance of stalking him. Father saw nothing, and to-day only two females. They are disappointed with this place; and to-morrow we are going on to Es Sened, about six hours from here. J. D. C. rejoined us yesterday. He had got one ibex, rather a small one. He has now moved on, and camped about three miles from here.

H. M. B.

* Male ibex.

WADI NIMR (VALLEY OF LEOPARDS):
February 7, 1894.

Yesterday was an exciting day. We wished to get up some high mountains and have a good view; so we determined on Jebel Ferani, which was about three hours' camel ride to the east of our camp, and which should command a fine view of the Gulf of Akaba and the Arabian Mountains. We were accompanied by Joseph and the sheik. The latter said it was more than a day's journey away, so he was rather surprised when we arrived at the foot of the mountain by ten o'clock; but the Arabs are always vague about distances. We rode down Wadi Nasb, which is full of palms and tamarisks, Joseph beguiling the way with many histories. In the flat sandy floor of the valley we saw many tracks of leopard, gazelle and ibex.

The nearer we got to the mountain the steeper it looked; however, we started gallantly to climb it, in the broiling sun. All the lower slopes were composed

of loose rocks, only just balanced upon one another, which fell in avalanches as one stepped upon them. It seemed to get steeper and steeper as we went on. Joseph carried the luncheon, and kept spilling portions of it all the way. We saw one little delicacy after another roll down the mountain side, so at last it seemed better to eat what remained, before all was gone, though it was not nearly lunch time. The sheik, who was pale with fright, implored us not to go on, and declared we must all be killed, but we decided to try a little further. We left him behind, utterly exhausted, and calling on Allah to preserve us. At last we were brought up by an impossible place round the corner of a precipice, and, as we had promised to be very careful, we had to beat an ignominious retreat, feeling *very* small indeed.

Old Joseph wouldn't allow us to come down without a great deal of unnecessary assistance. He took us by the hand, and made us run down at a breakneck pace, which, if not dangerous, was certainly very painful. What with the roughness of the way, and the pace we



THE SHEIKH DIRECTS.

had come, we had hardly any strength left in our legs by the time we got to the bottom. Joseph, who is a sort of fairy godmother in his way of producing unexpected but very welcome things, made us some orangeade, which quite revived us.

As we were riding home in the cool of the evening a most exciting incident occurred. We saw a gazelle* retreating, about four hundred yards ahead of us. The Arabs said he was sure to come back past us, as the rocky cliffs of the valley were far too steep for a gazelle to climb, and he would be afraid of going through a clump of *tarfah* trees, which filled the bottom of it from side to side a little way in front of him. This is because he is afraid of the leopards, or perhaps of men, who may be lying there in ambush. We kept on catching sight of him, still in front of us, for some way, until he disappeared behind a corner. I had the kodak ready in case he

* This was the Dorcas gazelle, the commonest species throughout Northern Africa and Arabia. They are rather scarce in Sinai, as they love plains rather than mountains, and this was the only specimen seen by any of the party.

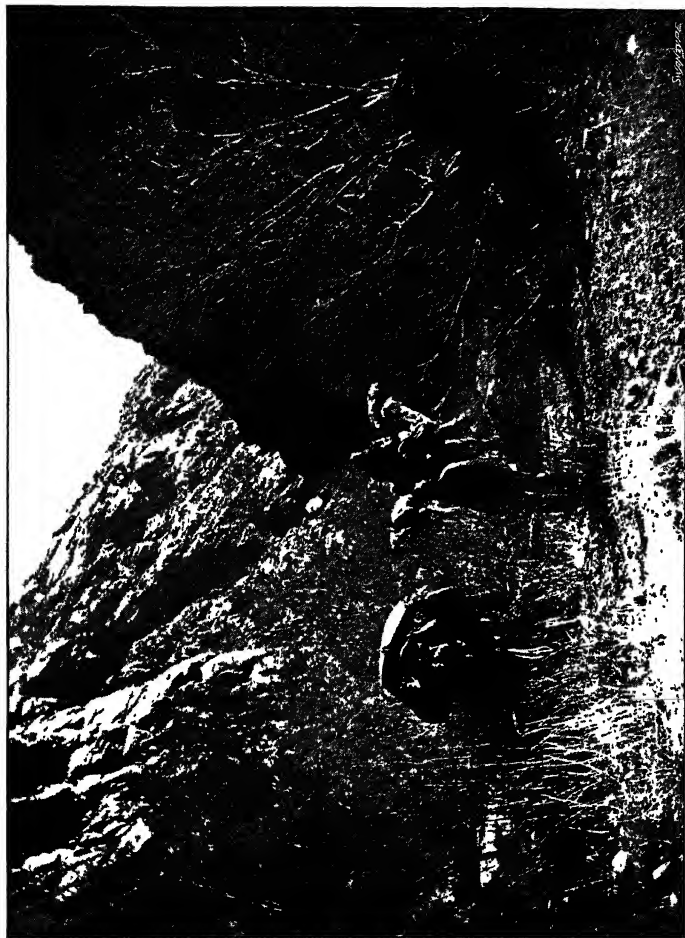
should come near enough for a snap-shot. When we rounded the corner there he was, coming straight for us. The valley was only about fifty yards wide, and he was frightened by the Arabs right across to the side where we were riding, and galloped within five yards of us like a flash of lightning. As he passed he fell head over heels over a rock. I got a splendid shot with the camera, but, as usual on such occasions, it wouldn't go off.

We got into camp before dark. Neither of the stalkers had done anything, so we felt we had had by far the most sporting day.

WADI ES SENED : *February 7.*

We have moved here to-day, about four hours from Wadi Nimr. This is a broad, flat valley, not very interesting in itself. There are some fine peaks, which we, T. and I, mean to climb.

Our last camp proved a disappointing one. The hills all round were absolutely no good. Yesterday afternoon Father went further afield to a much higher mountain,



and there he spied a lot of fourteen, and some very good heads among them. He had a long stalk, but, as generally happens, they had shifted.

This morning he discovered that we had, without knowing it, come round to the back of the range which J. D. C. is hunting. In fact, he came across him stalking; so, to avoid clashing, we had to move camp again.

We two had climbed up a hill overlooking the camp to sketch, when we saw all the camels being collected and tents taken down, as if we were going to move camp again. Then we saw Father, who hailed to us to come down. So this afternoon we have moved further up the valley, and are now camped in a very pretty open wadi, at the foot of two fine peaks, Abu Sened and Jebel Sah-sah. They are said to teem with ibex, but Father and W., who have both been out spying since we got here, have seen nothing.

It has been much warmer again till to-day, but to-night it feels as if we had got into the Arctic regions again, and it looks like snow.

T. B.

February 9.

Our messenger came back from Tor to-day, but, alas! no letters, and I suppose we shall have to wait at least another week before we get them.

T. and I had a splendid walk to-day. We went to the Plain of Es Sened—such a curious place. It is a wide plain, covered with groups of sand-worn granite rocks. Sand, blown before the wind, has cut them about, and hollowed out great holes in their sides, which give them a most curious appearance. To the south and west we are sheltered by fine peaks, but to the north and east you have a grand view of low mountains and plain. From the top of one of the foot-hills the mountains of Arabia were blue and clear. We started this morning, feeling as if we should never be warm again, in the face of a biting wind. When we came back we were quite slack with the heat, and longed for an icy shower-bath. We did several little sketches, though this morning it was too cold to sit at it long. We are running rather



HASSAN SPYING.

short of water, and there is no good source near the camp, so, to-day, we are only allowed a very scanty supply for washing purposes.

PLAIN OF ES SENED :

February 11.

We like this camp, which is less shut in than most. A great wide sandy plain at the foot of some lovely peaks, and to the north we get a grand view of distant mountains, with the Tih Plateau to the north, and to the east we can see the Arabian mountains, which stretch away as far as the Dead Sea. At last we seem to have come to the right place for the old ibex, or *taytal*, as the Arabs call the old male patriarchs. There seem to be some on this range, and they have seen a lot nearly every day, but chances seem to come seldom. W. is just come back with a small ram and a female, which he mistook for a ram. Father has not been out to-day, except to spy for a short time after we got here. Celestin saw with the glass two fine old rams quite close here, which are well-known

characters among the Arabs, and are supposed to bear a charmed life. We have got a most cozy camp here, at the foot of a pile of most curious rounded rocks, of which this plain is full.

Yesterday we both went out hunting with Father, and got high enough up to see Jebel Musa and Jebel Katerina* in the distance—our first view of them. They both have buildings of some sort on the top.

Owing to the open position of the camp, the evening effects have been specially lovely the last few nights, and, from here, the glow on the stretch of mountains is quite splendid. This plain is nearly 6000 feet above the sea, so that the nights are generally very cold, and in the evenings we sit in ulsters and sewn-up blankets, while our oven, with the charcoal pan on the top of it, is brought into our dining tent. The two Arab hunters amuse us very much; they are simple folk, and have very funny superstitions. Achmet told Father quite seriously that if he wished for luck he must load his rifle with part

* The sacred peaks above the Convent of St. Katherine.



UM ALLAWI, FROM SINAI.

of the stomach of an ibex that he had shot himself, and he produced out of his pocket a packet of very dried-up dust which he always uses if he has had a run of ill luck.

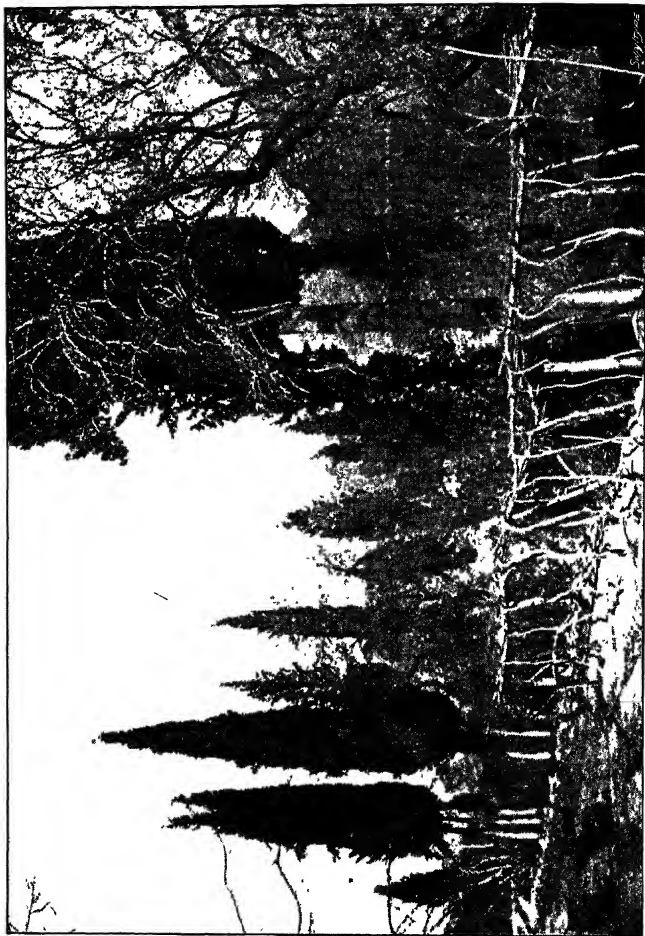
February 13.

We heard yesterday that Mr. C. has shot a real big ram ; the horns measure 35 inches.

Yesterday, after five o'clock breakfast, we started with Father, in the dark, and climbed up the Pass of Um Allawi. From the top we separated, Father to climb the Peak of Um Allawi, and T. and I to find our independent way to Mount Sinai and the Convent, about seven miles in a straight line over the mountains. It is such fun exploring these wild wadis by ourselves, and finding our way with a map and compass. After walking down a narrow steep little wadi for some way we came to a broad open valley, which took us straight to the foot of Mount Sinai. It was a walk of about four hours. We had not the courage to present ourselves, as unprotected females,

at the Convent gate, but stopped a long time on a little hill near the base of Ras Sufsafeh, a buttress of Jebel Musa or Sinai, in front of us, the Plain of Er Rahah to our right, and the Convent valley to our left. After lunch we sat and sketched the Convent. There were Arabs all over the place. They could not make out where we came from, especially when we told them that we were not staying at the Convent. At last they got rather troublesome, especially the children, and we had to chivy them away with our parasols. It took us a long time to walk back, and it was very hot work the first part of the way, as there was much loose sand, and we did not get home till it was nearly dark. That day quite finished our complexions.

H. M. B.



IN THE CONVENT GARDEN.



THE CONVENT VALLEY.

CHAPTER V.

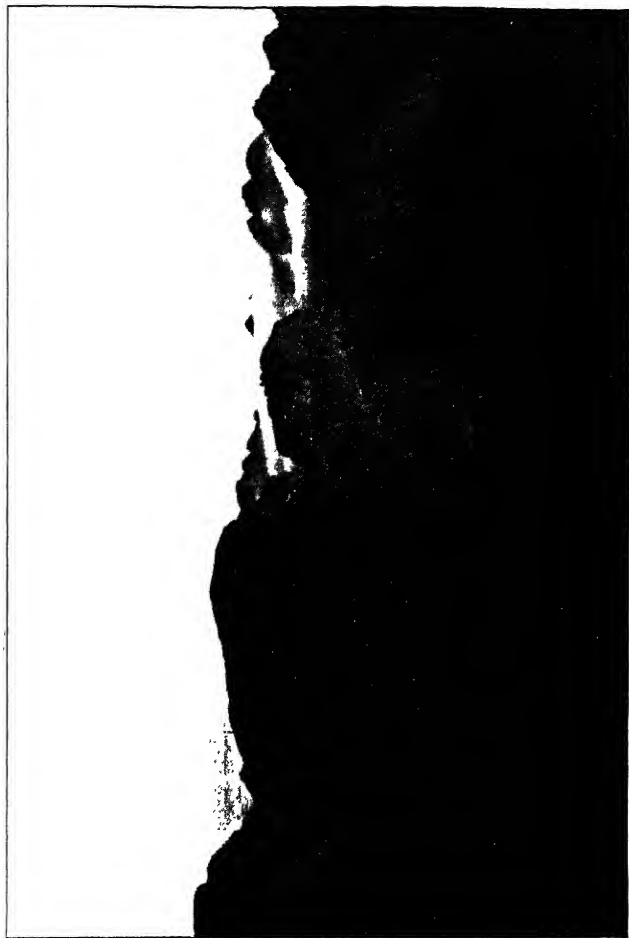
MOUNT SINAI.

WADI ED DEIR : *February 15.*

HERE we are, camped at last at the foot of Mount Sinai, near the point which T. and I reached the other day in our cross-country walk; that is, just under the peaks of Ras Sufsafeh, from which the Law was said to have

been delivered. It is an imposing mass of red granite, overlooking the Plain of Er Rahah, where the Israelites were encamped: a fine stretch of sand, sloping up to the base of more lovely jagged peaks. Sinai itself—that is, Jebel Musa and its outlyers—is a block of mountains three miles in length. We have come here to-day across the hills, riding as much as we could, and walking up the steep passes.

We had a most exciting walk up the Pass of Um Allawi from the Plain of Es Sened, where we had been camped before. Father and Celestin had gone on to spy. As the rest of us got near the top of the pass, we spied the two fine old male ibex, on the sky line of the highest peak, gazing at our cavalcade. We crawled on hands and knees to the top of the pass, and there we found Father who had also seen them. So he and Celestin stayed behind to stalk them, while W. and T. and I came on here. We had a very jolly walk, the last part of the way being all along the valley between Jebel Musa and Jebel Ed Deir. We came



JEBEL ED DEIR.

past the gates of the Convent, but did not go in, as we wanted to wait for Father before we paid our respects to the monks.

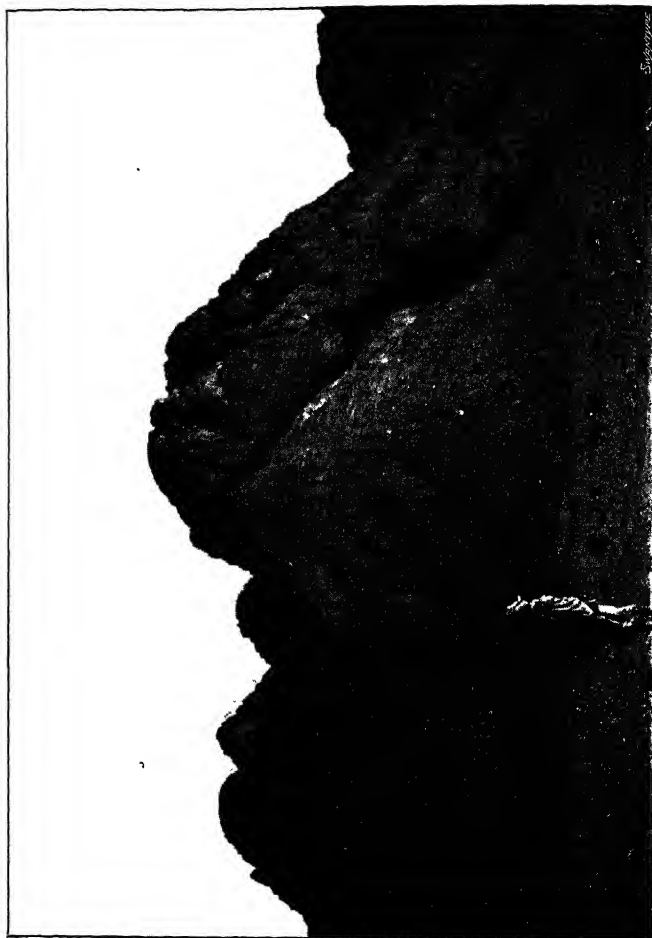
I think the monks must have thought us most flippant and disrespectful. We peered at them through the doors, and climbed the garden wall to have a look in. They are accustomed to being approached by pilgrims on their knees, and treated with the greatest reverence, and they looked at us as if they thought us wild animals. The garden is *so* pretty—full of cyprus trees, orange trees laden with fruit, almond and other fruit trees in blossom, with a running stream in the middle, and, for a background, a splendid red cliff of Jebel Musa.

Here we found Mr. C.'s camp as well as our own. We had not seen him for a long time, so we have a lot to tell each other. He has four heads, two *very* good ones indeed. Father had bad luck yesterday. He had missed a very fine one—a running shot—and then lost an easy shot owing to his cartridge missing fire.

Yesterday T. and I came in this direction again, and sketched the Convent from another point of view. It is such fun going these independent expeditions.

Father is making quite a collection of desert animals, but we have not risen above lizards and grasshoppers as yet. The Arabs are always bringing in fresh specimens, and are much amazed at our rage for them. T. and I caught such a queer thing the other day, half frog, half lizard. The other day, Father, Theresa and I, with a troop of Arabs, spent a whole afternoon on the Plain of Es Sened, trying to grub up jerboas and shoot a hare, but our efforts only resulted in a lizard and a grasshopper.

Our poor Arabs feel the cold dreadfully, and some have frightful coughs. They generally come to Father to be doctored when they have any ailments. One of the hunters had most fearful nose-bleeding the other day, and had a bad head-ache, so Father gave him some quinine pills. He promptly began to put them up his nose, as the simplest way of curing his malady.



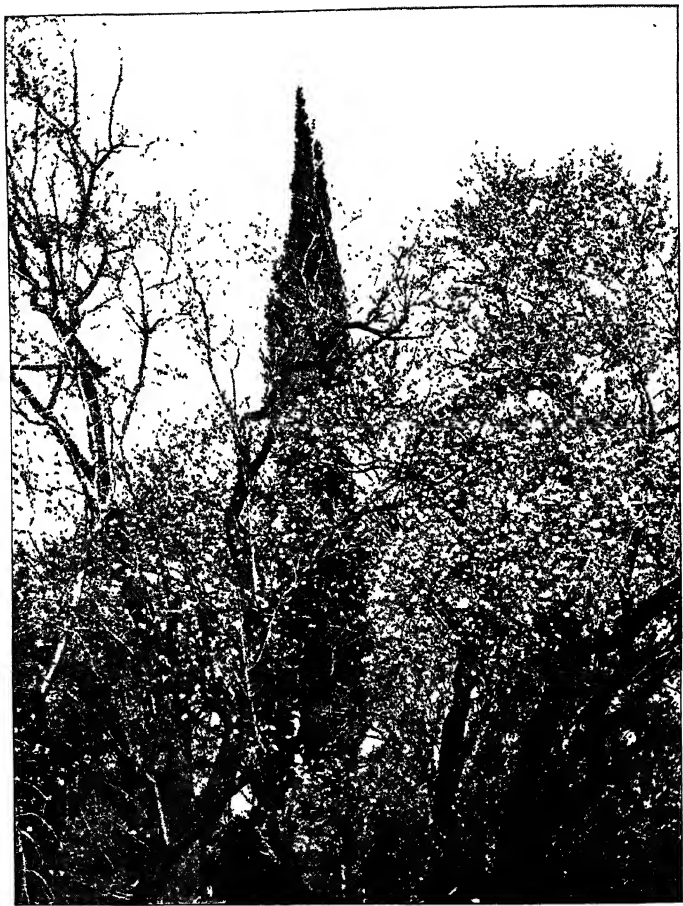
RAS SUFSAFEH FROM THE PLAIN OF ER RAHAH.

WADI ED DEIR, MOUNT SINAI :

February 17.

. This morning we all went up to the Convent. We had heard that all the Russian pilgrims were to start yesterday, but they only left this morning, and we were in time to see the preparations for departure, which were most amusing. When we got to the door of the Convent a very busy scene was going on. The entrance and courtyard were swarming with these Russian pilgrims and Arabs loading their camels. Such a funny frowsy lot the Russians were, and they looked out of place there. The stout old dames were the funniest—regular old market women, with very round Dutch faces, and handkerchiefs tied over their heads—each one shouldering her umbrella, with which she belaboured any refractory Arab who did not pack her camel according to her wishes. We stood and watched and photographed them for some time. A few uninviting monks were pottering round, and giving

their farewell blessings to the parting guests. We are not at all attracted by these old monks; but there are exceptions, and Father Daniel, who was very polite to us, is one. Most of them wear their long hair done up in untidy little buns at the backs of their heads. After going through the usual ordeal of date-brandy, with a very solid lump of Turkish delight, and Turkish coffee, Father Daniel took us over the Convent. It is the most extraordinary jumble of buildings I ever saw, enclosed within high massive walls, which give it a very prison-like appearance from outside. In the middle are a church and a mosque and a belfry, all built at different times and in various styles. On one side are the pilgrims' and travellers' quarters, and the monks live on the other. There are two or three small libraries, and several minor chapels, and every separate building is a different height and on a different level to the others, and they are all connected with quaint little staircases and passages. Two Englishmen, Oxford students, are staying there, working away at the old manuscripts, and seeking for



CYPRESS AND ALMOND BLOSSOM.

hidden treasures ; but the monks seem to be rather jealous over their old books, though they take no care of them, and most of them are in a fearful state of decay.

The Church of St. Catherine has some beautiful things in it, old tapestries, plate, hanging lamps and quaint pictures. Behind it is the Chapel of the Burning Bush, held very sacred by the monks, and supposed to be built over the actual site. Far the loveliest thing about the Convent is the garden, with its fruit and cypress trees, and lovely views of mountains beyond. In the garden is the charnel-house, where we saw a most ghastly sight. The skulls of the monks are piled up in one great heap on one side, and their hands on the other, and there they are, all grinning at you as you go in. Near the door, on a little shelf, is the skull of one who acted as porter, with a smart velvet cap on his head, and lying on his smart cloak, looking oppressed with this grandeur. T. and I sketched in the garden while Father and Mr. C. took a lot of photographs. We had meant to go on up Jebel Musa, but the Convent exhausted all our time

for the monks are a leisurely people, and keys were never forthcoming when they were wanted; so we gave it up. After lunch we rode round to the ruined Convent of El Arbain, in a valley to the west of Mount Sinai, where there are some old deserted gardens, in which we again sat down to sketch. When we got back to camp we found that our friend, Father Daniel, and the Economos (the head of the Convent) had come to pay a call. We had a very funny tea party. They did not understand that sort of meal at all. They arranged all their food in their saucers, quite despised plates, and took great lumps of butter on their knives, and popped it straight in. The jam was much appreciated, and was eaten straight out of the jam pot.

WADI SOLAF: *February* 17, 1894.

We ended our day yesterday with a dinner party. Our guests were the two Oxford students mentioned before. They had some difficulty in persuading the monks to let them out, and had to promise on no account to be late

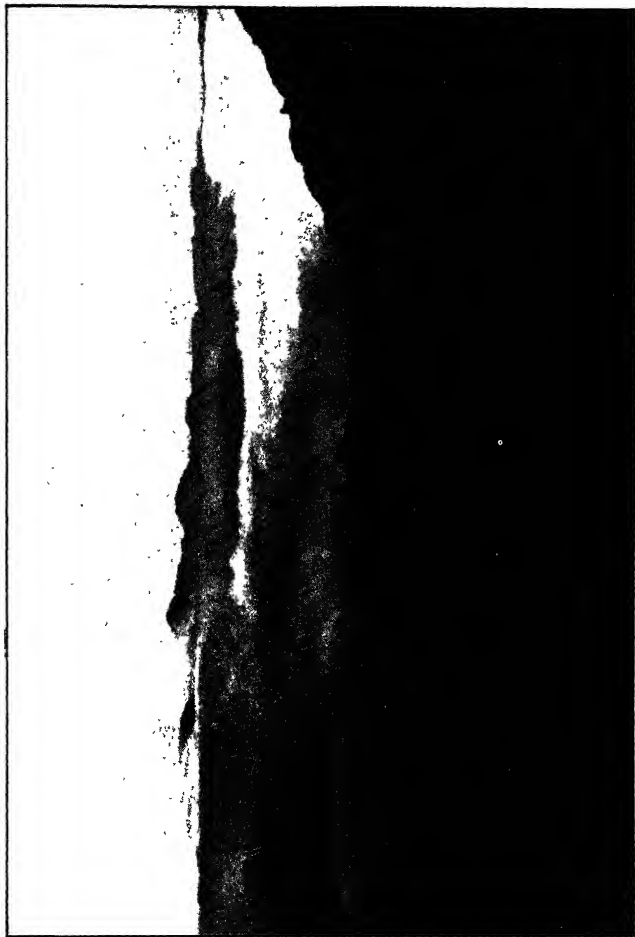


THE PILGRIMS' QUARTERS.

than 9 o'clock, for the good brothers are early bed-goers and don't like late hours. It wanted some fitting in and arranging to squeeze seven people in, but we managed all right, and our cook gave us the most regal repast. Our guests had boasted very much of their cook's powers of bread-making. We declared he could not beat ours, so they came armed with a big loaf. But they had to own that ours took the cake. Their experiences of the old monks were very funny. The students hardly ever go out of the monastery, and must be great enthusiasts over their manuscripts not to get sick of it.

We were very keen to get up Jebel Musa before sunrise. We were called at 3.15, and started soon after four, with two or three torches. It was such fun starting by starlight. We went past the Convent and up the usual way. There is a very well-made ancient path—or rather staircase—with rough rock steps, nearly the whole way, and we found it quite easy with our torches. It was so cold that we climbed quickly, and reached the highest peak, which is 2500 feet above the Convent, in two hours after pass-

ing its gate. It was worth anything to see that sunrise. There was a great sea of white fleecy cloud below us, out of which the mountains appeared like dark islands against the light, and, when the sun rose and lighted up these clouds, the effect was magical, while behind us, the rounded peaks glowed with red light. At the top we sat for a long time sketching and photographing, and then went on to the peak of Ras Sufsafah, whence Moses descended with the table of the Law to the Israelites in the plain below. It is all one great mountain, and *such* a fine one. There are several chapels that you pass on the way up, and a spring called Moses' Well, where he is supposed to have watered Jethro's flocks. One of the chapels was built to commemorate a miraculous expulsion of fleas from the Convent, but the effect of it has not lasted to the present day, unfortunately. There is a lot of water on the mountain, and on the tops, between the peaks of Jebel Musa and Ras Sufsafah, there are two or three considerable pools. Most of them and the streams were frozen over this morning, and there were one or two



SUNRISE FROM JEBEL MUSA.

patches of snow about. We had a very slippery climb down from Ras Sufsafah. The rocks were all covered with white frost, which made them like ice. Near the bottom we came upon a lovely spring. The rocks all around were green with maiden-hair. We gathered as many roots as we could. We got down about ten, having been nearly six hours over it.

After lunch we rode on to this Wadi Solaf, down a steepish ravine, the Nagb Howa, our baggage camels having to go a long way round. J. D. C. separated from us again to-day, and has gone back to his old camp, where he got his good heads. He is going back to Cairo earlier than we are. If they find this good hunting ground the camp will be fixed here for a few days, and, while Father continues his hunt, Theresa and I will perhaps be allowed to make our little excursion to Feiran.

Old Joseph will take the greatest care of us. He is quite splendid in all departments. He is cobbler, tailor, cook, carpenter, valet—everything. He manages the Arabs

most splendidly, though they worry him out of his life, but he never loses his temper.

At the Convent we had to change nearly all our camels, and give a fresh lot of Arabs a turn. There was a fearful commotion over this change and allotting the baggage afresh, for, as Joseph says, if you give them a napkin more than their share, they won't take it.

H. M. B.



CHAPTER VI.

FEIRAN.

WADI FEIRAN : *February* 19, 1894.

T. AND I are having an independent camp here. It is such fun. We started off early this morning, with Joseph as chaperon, lady's maid and cook. We look upon him as a sort of kind, indulgent uncle. It took us

about eight hours to get here. The first part of the way was along a very flat, dull wadi, but Joseph kept us amused by stories of his adventures. When we reached this valley we came upon, first, a feathery grove of tarfah trees, and next, thickets, or rather forests, of palm trees. This valley is the most fertile in the peninsula, and here the Arabs assemble in great numbers, on the site of the old Paran. Here they grow all their dates. Each tree belongs to a different Arab; and they have regular gardens, and grow wheat, tobacco, &c. A delicious stream fertilises it, and in some places they water the valley with *shādloofs*. It *did* look lovely this afternoon. The bright green palm trees contrast with red mountains as a background, the distant ones a deep blue. Our camp is just at the end of *such* a grove of palm trees, under Mount Serbal, a very rugged peak, and one of the highest of the range. Fearful damage was done here in that flood the other day, and a lot of palm trees were torn up by the roots.



WADI FEIRAN.

February 20.

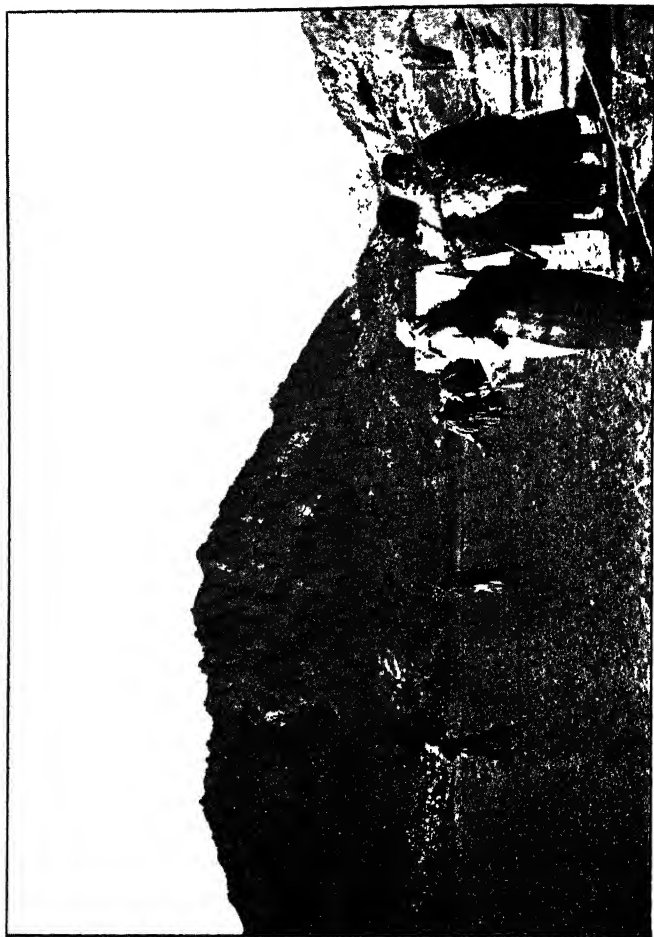
When we reached our camp yesterday we explored the valley, and then went up Jebel Tahuneh, only an hour's climb, to see the sunset. This valley is supposed to be Rephidim, and Jebel Tahuneh the hill where Moses sat when the battle against the Amalekites was going on.

We had a most amusing dinner, the cooking going on almost under the table. It was a most glorious moonlight evening, and after dinner T. and I strolled in the palm grove. I can't tell you how beautiful it was, but you know what the moonlight nights here are like. It *is* such fun having this camp to ourselves. We started yesterday, not having the least made up our minds where we were going to camp or anything, and we just stopped when we felt inclined. We are quite free rovers, and can please ourselves about everything, and old Joseph is agreeable, though I know he thinks we are as mad as hatters. It is ever so much warmer here than at Sinai, as it is lower. To-night we are going up a steep

lateral valley, which descends from Mount Serbal, and where it is rather difficult for loaded camels to go, and are to sleep out in the open at the foot of that mountain. We only made the plan last night, and rather surprised our chaperon when we proposed it at first, but we soon got round him. We had wanted to explore the valley very much, and it is most convenient that we can't easily take tents up there. There is a certain palm grove there where we mean to take up our abode, and a running stream.

This morning we have been spending in this valley, vainly trying to sketch these lovely palm groves. The only objection to this place is that it is so full of Arabs, and they won't be shaken off, but pursue us everywhere.

Our appearance doesn't improve as time goes on. All our clothes show signs of wear and tear, and we go about as comfortably untidy as we like. Father's dining costume gets odder every night. He now wears, by way of full dress, the nether part of his pyjamas, with all his other clothes tucked into them, and his old ulster above.



WADI SOLAF.

WADI SOLAF: *February 21.*

We are just back from our independent expedition, and have rejoined the main army. It was tremendous fun, and a great success. . . .

In the afternoon we had a hot walk up Wadi Aleyat, Joseph and one camel accompanying us. We left our tent and the rest of the baggage behind in Feiran, and reached our camping-place in about an hour and a half. It was a charming camp. A grove of palm and bright green acacia trees, through the stems of which we gazed up at Mount Serbal, a splendid jagged peak. We had risen a good deal, and were right at the head of the valley. There was a seductive pool there, under a big rock, and we sat and dangled our legs in it. The rest of the valley was bare desert, and our little oasis looked all the greener in comparison. We chose a flat shelf under a big rock for our bedroom, and Joseph's kitchen was close by. After tea we sketched and photographed, and then Joseph gave us a most elaborate dinner of several courses.

Our bundle of mattresses made a splendid table, and we sat on our wraps. All dinner time, Joseph was dinning into our ears most terrible stories of leopards, hyenas and wolves, and wild Bedawin, which, he said, swarmed in that valley. He was very anxious to terrify us, because we had made a plan of crossing the intervening mountains to a certain Wadi Er Rimm next day, a short cut to Feiran, where we intended to meet the camels. He said it was impossible for us to go alone. We insisted, and all these terrors were produced to daunt us. An Arab saw two leopards quite close to our camping-place, and the stupid man never called us to see them. To emphasise his stories of wild beasts, Joseph fired two pistol shots, before retiring to bed, with great gusto, to frighten them away. It was a most delicious warm night, and we did not want all our coverings. We slept like tops, and whenever we *did* wake, there were the moon and stars right above us. When we woke up, just before sunrise, about 5.30, Joseph was already up, and had lit the kitchen fire. Breakfast was ready in



A SHELTERED CORNER.

about ten minutes. We expected to have a tussle with him about sending an Arab with us for our walk, but he was most amenable, and no more mention was made of the "tigers" or "wild Bedouin." We afterwards discovered that that sly old Joseph had sent an Arab behind us to watch us, but we remained in blissful ignorance of his presence. I wish you could see his face when we unbottle one of our plans to him. He suppresses his mirth for a few minutes, screwing up his eyes and mouth with a great effort, then goes off into a peal of laughter. He has been used to ladies who travel with their maids, and he can't understand our being able to find our way about with a map and compass. He is splendid company, and keeps us in roars of laughter. His English is so funny. He has had a lot of experiences, and a never-failing fund of stories. We found our walk from Aleyat to Feiran by Wadi Er Rimm very simple and easy, and met none of the supposed dangers by the way. We longed to come across a leopard, but, though we saw some very fresh tracks, the animal itself was not forthcoming.

It was a dull sandy wadi, and, except for some fine views of Serbal, there was not much to see on the way. We hit off the camels at the appointed place, where Wadi Er Rimm enters Wadi Solaf. Joseph was much surprised to see us so soon, as they had had twelve miles to go round.

When we got "home," we found W. back from hunting, and rather miserable at having lost a very good ibex. They have gone out again to-day, to have a good look for him.

To-day, Father is taking a day off, and is exploring a fine steep gorge with us, about half-an-hour from our camp in Solaf. There is quite a big stream running down it, with deep pools under the rocks, and miniature waterfalls in some places. We hear that Wadi Isleh, which was blocked by the rocks, &c., brought down by the flood, is rendered impassible for camels, so our plans are rather upset, as we had meant to go back that way.

H. M. B.



A DESERTED GARDEN.

CHAPTER VII.

*WADI HEBRAN.**WADI SOLAF : February 23.*

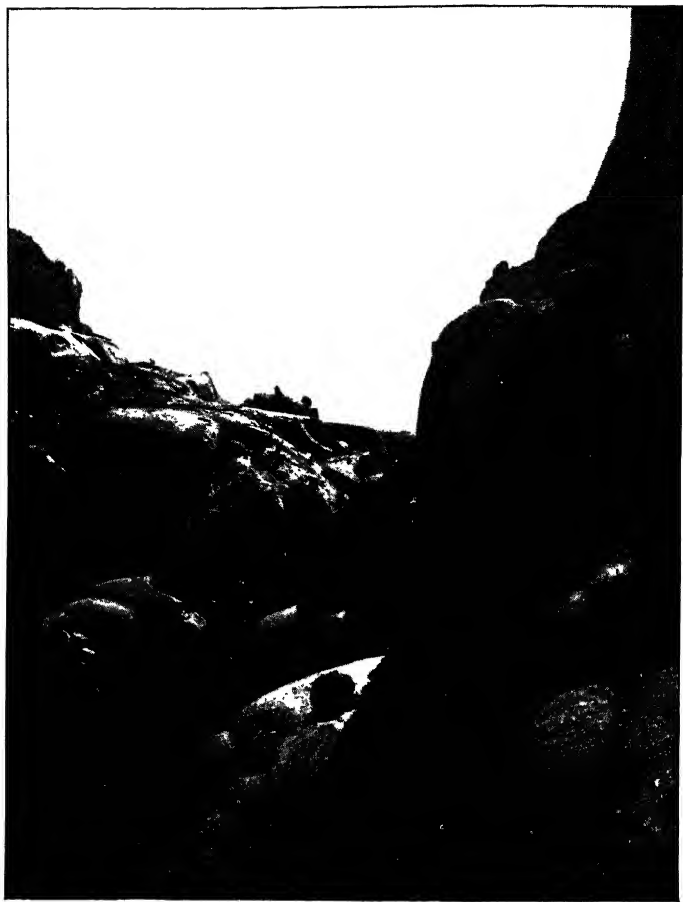
WE had such a windy night last night, and, when we woke this morning, everything was covered with sand, and several things blown away, but the Arabs brought them back one by one. We rode up to the top of Nagb Howa—the pass leading from here to Mount Sinai—from which we could see Ras Sufsafah, and from thence we climbed down into a deep gorge which we wanted to explore. It was full of old ruined gardens, with palm trees and fruit trees in blossom. There was a stream in the valley, and we had a most luxurious bathe in a pool, which would just hold one at a time with rather a squeeze.

The other had to keep watch, lest some Arabs should come along the valley.

We had a long camel-ride back from the top of the pass, as the camp has been moved to-day about two hours further down the Wadi. We get rather sick of our camels, sometimes; they are such sluggards, especially if they have any climbing to do. They seem to have no muscle whatever, and they get quite flabby and feel as if they were going to collapse altogether. Father has got quite a collection of birds, and small rats and mice, now for his desert case. He is very keen to get some hares and wabhr,* or conies, and employed an Arab on purpose to shoot them for him. But the man was not much use, for he spent all day over his fire smoking, and said that if he was meant to get them, Allah would send the hares and wabhr to him.

H. M. B.

* An animal the size of a rabbit, and not unlike in appearance and habits to a marmot



A MAUVAIS PAS ON JEBEL UM TÁKHAR.

WADI SOLAF: *February 26.*

Father and W. have been having much better sport the last few days, and their spirits have risen accordingly. Four ibex in the last two days—two apiece—which is pretty good. They have now five each. W.'s last head is a very good one.

Yesterday we had a very nice day with Father. We started about mid-day for a fine peak near the camp called Um Tákhār. The first part was a very long climb up a steep gully in the heat of the day. At the top of this we sat down to rest. Celestin and Husein, who were with us, went round a corner to spy, and soon came back, having seen some ibex close by. Father went down to make his stalk, leaving T. and me crouching on the top. We could see nothing; but in about ten minutes we heard a shot, and, almost directly after, a small ibex came galloping past, within about twenty yards of us. A few minutes after, they whistled for us to join them. The stupid Arab had spoilt the stalk by showing himself;

but the ibex offered a long chance when they reappeared on the other side of the ravine, and Father had made a good shot and got a small ram. This diversion had taken about an hour, and it was now rather late, but we were determined to persevere and get to the top. The Arab said the peak had never been climbed and was impossible, but we sent him back with the ibex, and went on. From this point it was very steep, and we had some delightful climbing. Just at the end Celestin was in high glee, and kept dancing along the edge of the precipices, and pretending to jump over. I am quite sure he picked out the most difficult places he could find on purpose ; but he hauled us up splendidly, all the while saying " *C'est parfaitement facile, il n'y a aucun danger.*" At one place he invited us to jump down about six feet on to a little ledge and, standing himself on the very edge of the precipice, said, "*Sautez, mademoiselle, et moi je serai le rempart.*"

There was no sign of any one ever having been to the top before, and we were conceited enough to make a cairn and put our names in it.

THE SUMMIT OF IREI IIM TAVMAR



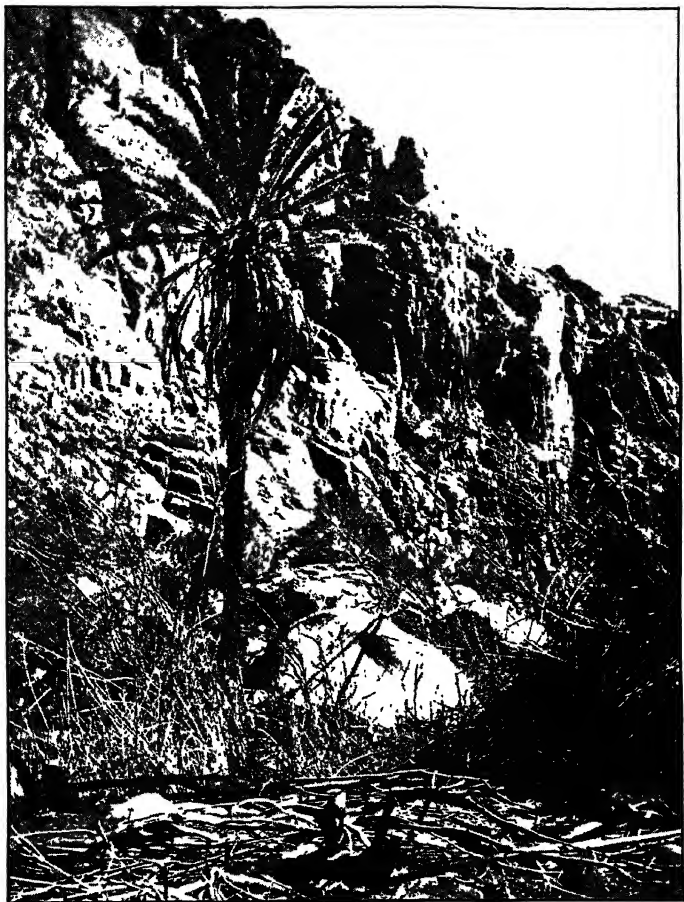
There was a forest of Aiguilles between us and Serbal : a grand view over the Gulf of Suez. Just below us was the Wadi Segiliyeh, a strange, wild place, very difficult to reach ; but there is good water, and, consequently, there were formerly some old monasteries there. Celestin was not allowed to choose the way down, and we found a much easier one than the one we came up by. We weren't into camp till some time after dark, and found Joseph anxiously awaiting us. W. came in still later with a fine ibex.

T. B.

WADI HEBRAN : *February 28.*

Yesterday, T. and I had a very jolly day on the hills with Father, though we did not see any ibex. It was the first blank day they have had in this part of the country ; but it was a very cool day, and pleasant for walking. The Red Sea, of which we had some very pretty glimpses, looked warm, while the peaks above us were sprinkled with fresh snow, and were beautiful

in another way. The only animals we saw were some conies on the rocks. Last night we had another thunder-storm, and it poured nearly all night. We trembled in our beds, and expected to hear there was a flood coming down our valley every minute, for, in the storm three weeks ago, an Arab encampment that was pitched not far from this was washed away, and six women and twelve children were drowned. We *were* lucky, in that rain, not to have been camped in one of the flooded valleys. We are always hearing fresh stories of the damage done by that flood. The Arabs say they have not had such a bad one for twenty years. But last night no water came down Solaf, and, thanks to Joseph's efforts, who was up nearly all night digging drains round our tents, our things were quite dry this morning. We have moved some way down Hebran to-day. It has been frightfully cold and stormy, there is snow on all the mountains round, and it looks as if more would fall; it certainly feels like it. Joseph has just been in to ask if we should like "some fire" to warm the tent, and has brought a tin basin full of burning



AFTER THE FLOOD.

charcoal, which is put on a stool, and warms us splendidly. After dinner we have conferences with the Arab hunters who peer in from the darkness. Their remarks are much improved by Joseph's funny English translations. Last night we had a very long story about an Arab legend connected with Um Shomar, a high peak above Wadi Isleh. We had heard some extraordinary noises from it like heavy artillery, which the Arabs regard as supernatural. Their explanation of it was this. An Arab hunter, when on an expedition up this mountain, came across a beautiful young lady, with whom he was much smitten. She bound him to secrecy as to her whereabouts; but when he got home he told his friend about her, and the next day the two started to find and carry her off. But they found no trace of her, and a stone blocked the entrance to the cave where she had disappeared. The story goes, that she was so "unpleased" (as Joseph expressed it) with these two that she retired into the mountain, and still periodically gives vent to her wrath by making these noises.

I wish you could see Sbhr, one of our hunters. He *is*

so funny. He has a great rage for sewing, and, when he has nothing else to mend, he stitches the cuts on his feet with little bits of blue thread.

March 2.

To-day we have moved camp further down the valley to a lovely palm grove, with very high cliffs of pink granite on each side, one of the prettiest camps we have had, and most refreshing after the dreary stony waste at the head of the valley, where our last camp was. T. and I got as far as this yesterday, to sketch the snow-covered mountains in the morning, but in the afternoon it was very stormy again, and the rain came down in torrents while we were riding home, so that we were in a very dragged condition when we got in to camp. Father was home just before us, very wet and cold, having been sitting for some time in a snowstorm. He had done nothing. We all felt very damp that evening, the tents full of wet clothes; and we all sat round a pan of charcoal till we were nearly stifled, but it *was* cosy.

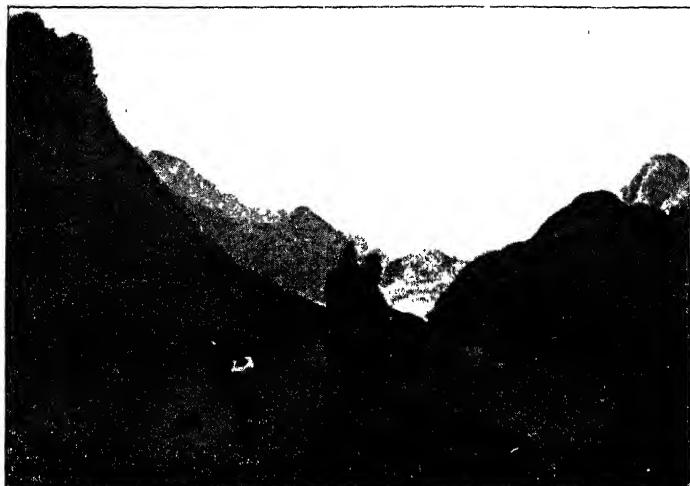


To-day has been sunny again, and we have been baking and drying in the sun. Father has shot his sixth ram, and had a very pretty stalk, he says. He has also added two of the small kind of partridges, which are rather scarce, to his collection, and W. has contributed a long snake, which he brought home in his telescope case; so the case is getting on. As it was still decidedly alive, and a very venomous kind, the Arabs were in great dread of it.

T. and I have been down the valley nearly as far as where it opens on the plain. It has a running stream most of the way. We found some splendid bathing pools and made full use of them. It was rather exciting, as Arabs are continually coming that way, and one of us had always to keep watch. We had many false alarms, and were always scuttling into our clothes again. It was rather a windy corner that we chose, and while I was bathing, all my clothes went flying about the place, and I found my poor old terai hat, veil, puggaree and all, whirling gaily down the stream. The hat was disreputable

before, but is worse now. Most of our boots also are, so to speak, on their last legs, but I think they will just hang on till we get to Suez. Some of our poor Arabs have got the most fearful coughs from all the wet and cold we have had, and nearly every night, one or other comes to be doctored. They have great faith in Father's powers, and would take anything he gave them, and whatever it is they always smack their lips over it, and say they are better in the morning. Essence of ginger is a capital medicine, because it is hot and strong.

H. M. B.



CHAPTER VIII.

TOR.

March 4, 1894.

WE are now camped just outside Tor, on the shore of the Red Sea, which nearly washes into our tents. We have had a longish march to-day across the desert, from the mouth of the Hebran Valley, where we were camped last night. Almost the whole way we came along Abbas

Pacha's road, or what remains of it. He *must* have been a madman. He was ordered desert air by his doctors, so he built himself a palace on the top of the mountains, close to Mount Sinai, and had a road made all the way there from Tor, all along those stony wadis. Of course, it was nearly all washed away by floods as soon as it was done, and, except across this desert, very few traces of it remain. When we came near Tor to-day, we rode through the oasis of palms, where there were a number of Arabs, who make their living by cultivating them, and distilling that disgusting date-brandy. The population of Tor appears to consist of monks, consuls and vice-consuls. When we arrived here, about four o'clock this afternoon, our camp being already up, we found one of the latter, who had called to invite us to come and partake of the usual feast of date-brandy, jam, &c. We declined, with thanks, putting off the evil day till to-morrow, and he came to tea with us instead. No sooner was he established than another caller dropped in, some sort of a consul, I think. He was also given tea, over which he looked most un-



SNUG QUARTERS.

happy. The usual stiff conversation was carried on, but they really had a topic to-day. This was an Austrian prince and his party, who are also hunting in Sinai, and left Tor about a week ago. Our second caller came accompanied by four soldiers, each wearing a different uniform for our benefit, and he left them to guard our camp. We have got one to each tent. They present arms whenever we come out.

It is sad that this is our last night in camp. We *have* had a very good time. I *shall* feel odd in respectable clothes again.

TOR: *March 6.*

Here we are still in this hole of a place, where we have been kicking our heels since Sunday night, and we have every prospect of remaining. There are no signs of the steamer, and everybody says it is often five days late. There is a launch here, which brought the Austrian party, and we have at last made an arrangement with the skipper to take us to Suez, as the Austrian party is not expected back yet a while. But he can only do it if the

wind goes down, and now a fearful gale has begun. Our tents have been laid flat one after another, and the kitchen and saloon tents are the only firm ones. This *is* a dreary flat place.

The Mecca pilgrims are quarantined here on their return—thousands of them—and many died here of cholera last autumn, which doesn't make it pleasant for us.

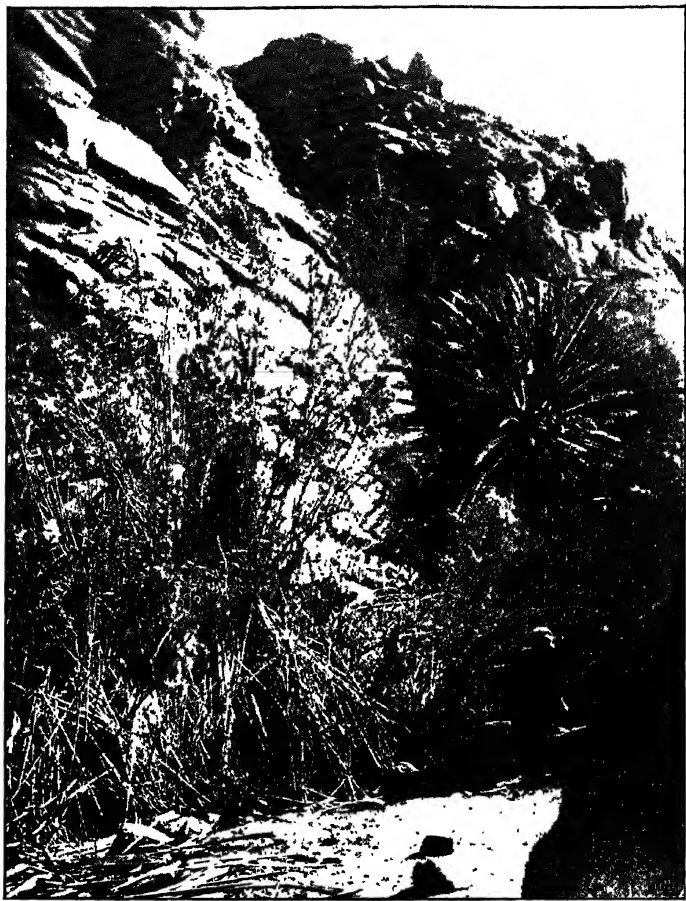
We had quite exhausted all the resources of the place by lunch time, yesterday. We have picked up all the Red Sea shells and paid our calls, which is the only form of exercise. The rest of the time there is nothing to do but sit and wait, and pack in the morning and unpack everything again in the evening. However, Cairo will be all the nicer, by contrast, when we do get there.

STEAM-LAUNCH "TEAZER" :

(and well-named, too)

March 7.

Here we are on our way to Suez at last, and having a tremendous tossing. After a dreary day at Tor yesterday,



ROCKS AND JUNGLE.

we had quite an excitement in the evening. Two or three men arrived on camels, looking very depressed. They were the captain and mate of our old Khedivial steamer, which had been stranded on a rock fifteen miles south of Tor, and we were the unwitting cause, for it was in putting in to Tor to fetch us, that she ran aground. It was on a reef close to the shore, so that those who wished to, had no particular difficulty in getting to land, though most of the passengers preferred to remain on her, as there was no fear of her breaking up. Among them are an English officer and forty soldiers from Aden. The captain has come here to try and send a message for a tug, and this we shall take for him. We asked him to dinner, but he was too sick and sorry to come. This was an excitement, at least, though it made us feel more stranded than ever. However, soon after, the wind suddenly went down, the captain of the steam launch was sent for, who said he might be able to start at any time in the night if it kept calm. So our things, which we had just unpacked again, were again put up; and late in

the evening we left our camp for good and all, to go aboard the launch. It was a funny departure at dead of night. Joseph stayed to go by land with the camp servants and some of the baggage. A boat brought us to the launch; and when all our baggage was on board, it was required to make another voyage to bring our Tor friends to bid us a last farewell, though we had already said good-bye to them many times on shore. After all, the launch did not start till early this morning. We have really been very lucky in not having more wind, but there has been a big swell on, and nothing is still for a moment in this little cockleshell of a boat. The results are disastrous to most of the party, but not, I am happy to say, to me. Our provisions are huddled up in a bag, which is constantly getting saturated with salt water which comes pouring over the deck. There is one scrubby little cabin, but we prefer the deck. I am afraid it is most uncomfortable for poor Father and the others, but, at least, we are on our way to Suez, where we hope to be early to-morrow morning.



JOSEPH.

SUEZ : *March 8.*

We got here early this morning, and never was I more rejoiced to be on dry land again. The sea went down yesterday evening, and we were congratulating ourselves that we should have a calm night—but no such luck. It got up again, and we had a fearful tossing. Father and W., sleeping on deck, had a real sea-water bath and got soaked, and the water came pouring into our cabin. T. and I were quite comfortable in bed, but the others must have had a wretched time. But now our troubles are over, and it is bliss to be in Mr. H.'s comfortable house. He and Mrs. H. have been most hospitable, and we feel clean and well fed.

H. M. B.

